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HISTORY OF HITCHIN

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THE HISTORY OF HITCHIN

VOLUME ONE

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HITCHIN MARKET-PLACE, WEST SIDE, 1845

From the painting by Samuel Lucas in the possession of Sam Lucas

THE HISTORY OF HITCHIN

By REGINALD L. HINE,
F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

VOL. II

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BY GRACIOUS PERMISSION A COPY OF THIS HISTORY OF THE ROYAL MANOR OF HITCHIN HAS BEEN PRESENTED BY THE AUTHOR TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING, AND A FURTHER COPY TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES

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DIRECTIONS TO THE READER

1. The authorities for all statements of fact are fully set out and numbered in the Bibliography at the end of the volume. In the text only the denoting number is given. Where the authority is of a general character and is frequently employed, the page, and if necessary the volume, of the particular reference is added. Thus (601) at the end of a sentence means that the work or manuscript so numbered in the Bibliography is a sufficient reference; (702. 27) signifies the work or manuscript so numbered and its 27th page or folio; (892. 2. 46) shows that the second volume and the 46th page or folio of the work numbered as 892 should be consulted.

2. Footnotes are distinguished by Roman numerals.

3. The index to both volumes will be found from page 509 onwards.

4. Will those readers and reviewers who discover any errors in the text kindly bring them to the notice of the author, so that they may be set right in a future edition?

THE HISTORY OF HITCHIN

MINSDEN CHAPEL (i)

' But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.'
SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*, 55.

I

MONGST the few ' haunts of ancient peace ' which the ruthless hand of time and the rough hands of men have spared to the inhabitants of Hitchin—Oughton Head, Gaping Hills, Mount Pleasant, Charlton Hamlet, Wellhead, Wainwood, Ninesprings, Purwell—there is none quite so haunting or peaceful as this neglected ruin. It is not so remote: two and a half miles along the Codicote road to the ' Royal Oak,' and a short burst up Chapel-foot way, will bring you to it. Yet there are thousands of folk in Hitchin town who have never even heard of Minsden Chapel. The memory of this secluded place (some derive its name from A.S. *meos* = moss and *dene* = valley) (ii) has been almost covered with the moss of time. It is only the more rugged stones of history that still show through.

In that indestructible monolith, the Domesday Survey, it is reported that ' King William holds Menlesdene; it is assessed at 4 hides. There is land for 8 ploughs. In the demesne there

i. I wish to express my thanks to Canon C. W. Foster, F.S.A., for searching the episcopal registers at Lincoln and for revising this chapter in its manuscript form.

ii. A fanciful derivation that cannot be supported. Professor Allen Mawer, Hon. Sec. of the English Place Name Society, whom I consulted, says: ' The earlier forms, Menlesdene in Domesday, and Mendlesdene, Mondesdene, Mundleston, Meddlesdene of the fourteenth century point quite clearly to an O.E. personal name MYNDEL as the first element. This would be a regular diminutive formation from the common O.E. name Mund(a), and would appear in Hertfordshire as Mundel, Mondel, and Mendel. The forms forbid any association with O.E. *meos*.'

are 2 hides and 2½ virgates. A priest with 8 villeins and 2 cottars have 3 ploughs between them, and there could be two more. There are 6 serfs. Meadow land there is sufficient for 1 plough team, and pasture sufficient for the livestock of the vill. There is woodland to feed 30 swine. The manor belonged, and still belongs (*Jacuit et jacet in*), to Hiz. Earl Harold held it' (461). By the next century the manor had passed out of the king's hands to one Guy de Bovencourt, in the hands of whose family, however, it did not long remain. In 1204 Bovencourt's heir was 'found with the king's enemies'; whereupon King John decreed a forfeiture and made over the manor for good money to Hugh de Baliol. Bovencourt's tenant, Elyas de Eston, appears to have been overwhelmed in his master's ruin. There was no question about his having been with the king's enemies. He had been innocently cultivating the ploughlands of Menlesdene. But he was disseized none the less, and his goods and chattels were taken away by the Sheriff. He also had to pay good money before he was reinstated (462–3).

The Baliols were to hold Minsden for just a century, until the fatal day came when John de Baliol, King of Scotland, was 'found with the king's enemies,' and all his lands were forfeited, 1296. For a time Edward I proposed to keep Minsden in his royal hands, but, wishing to reward Robert de Kendale, his faithful Constable of Dover Castle, he bestowed on him the forfeited manor of Hitchin in which Minsden lay; whereupon a pretty point of law arose. Had Minsden, after all, a separate existence? 'The manor belonged and still belongs (*Jacuit et jacet in*) to Hiz.' Was it not written so in Domesday? And, if so, would not Minsden pass as an appurtenance on any grant of Hiz? As soon as the King had set out on his campaign in Scotland, Kendale entered upon Minsden, and added its four hides to the five he held at Hitchin. For his lifetime he enjoyed possession and the nine points of the law; but a day of reckoning arrived. A king who was driven to pawn the Crown jewels to carry on his wars was not likely to forgo his right to six hundred acres of good land. For once the one point of the law prevailed; Sir Edward de Kendale was ousted and Minsden regained its independence (31. 3. 32).

In the reign of Edward III the Manor was conferred first for life and later in tail upon 'our beloved esquire John de Beverle for services rendered by him not without danger of body and

expense of substance' (iii); with the privilege, added later in 1366, that 'he and his heirs may have free warren in all his demesne lands at his Manor of Mendelsden so far as those lands are not within the bounds of our forest, and so that no one may enter those lands to chase in them or to take anything which pertains to warren without the leave of the said John under a penalty of ten pounds, payable to us.' The witnesses to this grant are 'the venerable fathers, the Bishop of Ely, our Chancellor, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, our treasurer, John, Duke of Lancaster, and Edmund, Earl of Cambridge, our dearest sons, Edward le Despenser, John atte lee, steward of our household,' and others (465–6). As Beverle died without male issue in 1380, the manor descended in thirds to his wife Amice, who married Robert Bardolf; his daughter Anne, who married William Langford, and his daughter Elizabeth, who married Sir John Dauntesey (467). As Walter, the son and heir of Elizabeth and John Dauntesey, inherited his third when he was only twelve years of age, 'the keepinge of his lands during minority' was granted for the consideration of £100 to Thomas de la Croys and Peter Walbere; they on their part undertaking to maintain the several houses and buildings in good repair and to render accounts at the Exchequer (469). But instead of observing their undertaking they carried off a great part of the goods and chattels in the manor houses, refused to account for the rents, assaulted the lord's servants, and committed all manner of wastes and dilapidations. In the end the unjust stewards were arrested and brought before the King. Justice was done; but restitution was impossible, and Walter's third was hardly worth the having when six years later, 1412, he came into the estate. To put all doubt at rest, the attainment of his majority was proved with unusual care. Before the Jurors assembled 'on the Feast of Corpus Christi,'

iii. The Patent Rolls from 1355–77 show what a favourite he was. Apparently he could do anything he liked with Edward III in his dotage. As for 'expense of substance,' it was money well laid out and brought back a hundredfold. There are innumerable grants of escheats, wardships, and forfeitures 'without rendering anything to the King's Exchequer for the same.' In addition, he was allowed 'two tuns of wine yearly, one at Christmas and the other at Easter' (1363); was appointed Constable of Limerick Castle (1363); Keeper of the King's Park at Eltham (1369); Keeper of Leeds Castle (1372); and was granted the monopoly of selling sweet wines in the towns of Boston, Lincoln, Stamford and Grantham (1374). With the old King's death and the accession of Richard II this flow of honours ceased. The sweet wine of life turned sour. In three years (1381) John de Beverle was dead.

William Bydyete, being sworn and examined, 'says that he is eighty years of age, and that he knows well that Walter Dauntesey came of age on the Tuesday before the feast of St. Gregory, Pope, last past, because on the day of the birth of the said Walter he was made reeve (*prepositus*) of Sir John Dauntesey, father of the said Walter.' William Bydyete, junior, who followed, 'says he is aged sixty and knows well that the said Walter is of the said age, because he had a son born and baptized on the day of his birth Robert by name. He died suddenly on the same day.' William Toym, aged sixty-five, declared that 'on the day of Walter's birth he was lying in the bed with his wife Agnes at dawn, and a certain Thomas Takerwell came to him in order that Agnes should come to the said Elizabeth, mother of Walter, to be her midwife, and so he had good knowledge thereof.' Thomas Player, John Bremelham, and Robert Cnedeworth, 'who are of the age of 50 years, know well that Walter is of the said age because they saw William Camme, Abbot of Malmesbury, who had gone to be godfather to the said Walter, riding back in the afternoon towards his Abbey; and he fell from his horse by the bridge and nearly broke his right thigh.' . . . 'And so the Jurors have full knowledge of the age of the said Walter' (471).

A few years later Walter sold his one-third share in Minsden to his cousin, Robert Langford, who had previously bought up the share of Amice Bardolf. Accordingly, when Langford died in 1419 the undivided manor of Minsden devolved upon his son, Edward (472). And so it passed from father to son until Sir John Langford in 1502 sold his inheritance to William Lytton (iv). From the Lyttons it passed, on failure of male issue, in 1555 to the Brocketts, and from the Brocketts it passed (*circa* 1615) to the Reades of Hatfield and Brockett Hall, and from them —once again on failure of male issue in 1712—to the Dashwoods, who hold it to this day (79. 3. 11).

II

It is not so much the Manor that one thinks of at Minsden, however, as the church. And there again the inquiry of the stranger, 'What mean ye by these stones?' is so hard to satisfy.

iv. Of the ancient and knightly family of Langford, landowners in Hertfordshire from the fourteenth century, William Francis Langford of Hitchin is the sole surviving representative.

SIR ROBERT LYTTON: LORD OF MINSDEN

Its history, like its walls, is in ruins, obscured—indeed, almost buried—beneath the moss and ivy of oblivious time.

It bore, as we know, the name of St. Nicholas—an early and popular dedication, not only beside the sea, where he was looked on as the patron of sailors, but inland, too, as protector of children and poor folk (v). We know also that this chapel of ease served the adjoining hamlet of Langley as well as the farming community of Minsden; and, standing as it did upon St. Alban's way, it gave its shelter and many a traveller's mass to the pilgrims passing by. For the rest, one has only such fitful rays of light as deeds and wills can throw. One most unusual indenture there is, dated in 1450, by which Robert de Walso (i.e. Walsworth, another hamlet of Hitchin) made over all his lands and tenements to his son, on condition that the latter should provide him with victuals and clothing suitable to his station, and a horse on which he could ride to church at Minsden. We learn from another that an acre of land at Minsden, afterwards called Lamp Acre, was given for the maintenance of a light within the church. John Pulter, by will dated 1485, 'gives to the reparacion of the chapell of Seint Nicholas in Mynesden in the paroch of Hichen, 3s. 4d.' John Emmyng, by his will dated 1524, gives 'to Mynysden chapell, 20d.' James Cheetham, by his will, 1523, gives 22 quarters of malt. Nicholas Mattock, who was born at Minsden and baptised with the name of its child-protecting saint, in spite of the wealth he afterwards accumulated, gives nothing. Margerie Astrye, on the other hand, though she left this hamlet to be the wife of the Lord Mayor of London, was not unmindful of Minsden when she came to die: '1524. I give and bequeath unto our lady Chapell of Mynnesden nygh Hichyn where I was born a chalis with a paten of silver all gilt which is occupied in my chapell to pray for my soul and all christian soules.' By the will of George Burwell, 1540, 'a piece of ground called Wellis shall never be sold nor made away by no manner of means, but to remayne from heire to heire for ever. Also I will that out of this piece of ground shall be deducted and taken yerelie for every yeare so long as the world standeth XLd. by yere for a yerely obytt to be kepte in Mynsden chapell so long as the chapell staundethe. If the chapell go doune (vi), it to

v. There are six other churches in Hertfordshire dedicated to this saint, one of them being Stevenage, which is within sight of Minsden.

vi. A very significant phrase, showing how early the chapel had begun to decay.

be done yerely in Hytchin churche.' John Godfrey, 1544, gives ' to the high altar of Mynsden chapell a bushell weate.' Margaret Grave, 1545, bequeaths ' one Kettil with a bend to the chapell of Mynesdene to this intent that it serve for making of the waxe for the same chapell; and, if so be that any that longs [belongs] to the said chapell have neade of it, the same kettil to be lendide to them for the space of three days and so to be restored to the said chappell agayn ' (477).

From the inventory ' concerning the goods belonging to the chapell of Mynsdely in Langlye,' made by Edward VI's Commissioners in 1552 (478), we gain a further glimpse into the interior:—

' One Chalice of silver weighing VIII oz. Memo There is lead or tyn in the bottom.
One crosse of copper and gilte with a crosse cloth of green sarcenet stened [i.e. stained].
One vestment of white damaske and tawny vellat [i.e. velvet] with all things thereunto belonging.
A Corporas case of tissue with a cloth in it.
iii playne aulter clothes.
ii bells in the steple.
ii hande bells.'

It seems as though the people of Minsden lost all heart in their church services after the Reformation. By the condescension of the Commissioners the chalice was excepted from their spoliation that it might become the cup in the new office (1552) of the Lord's Supper. But it was to be very seldom used. Too few in number and too poor, the church-folk of St. Nicholas were unable to provide a minister for themselves; and they were much too independent to agree to the suggestion of the Hitchin Vicar that they should come down of a Sunday to St. Mary's. As need arose—perhaps five or six times a year—John Huddleston (1604–1621) and Stephen Peirce (1621–1636) would ride up to Minsden for a baptism, a marriage, or a burial; but for the statutory services on the Lord's Day they were less and less inclined to come (vii). With each year the rift between the mother and the daughter church widened; with each year the neglect of St. Nicholas grew worse, until in 1650 the Commis-

vii. The original registers are lost. But Bishops' transcripts exist at Lincoln for the years 1608–1610, 1615, 1616, 1618, 1620–1641 (481).

sioners appointed to inquire into the state of Ecclesiastical Benefices were driven to report that there was a chapel called Minsden Chapel, but that they were ignorant of its value; that the privy tithes belonging to it were worth £13 per annum; that no dues had been paid to the Vicar of Hitchin for many years; that it had been destitute of a preaching minister for divers years last past; that the chapel had fallen into great decay; *and that they presented it fit to be made a parish church* (482).

III

However astonished the ' hamblettors ' may have been at the Commissioners' presentment, they did what they could to deserve the honour which those in authority proposed to confer upon them. Here was a chance to gain at one stroke the independence they so ardently desired. As soon as their means permitted, therefore, they set to work in earnest upon the repair of the chapel that might yet be made a church. The unhappy issue of that endeavour can be read in retrospect in a petition of the year 1688: ' To the Right Hon. the Lords Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes. The humble petition of John Holton and John Farr with others, the inhabitants of the Hambletts of Preston and Langley, humbly sheweth that for tyme beyond the memory of man there hath been an ancient Chappell called Minsden Chapell belonging to the Hamletts of Preston and Langley unto which the inhabitants usually resorted on Sundayes and holy dayes to heare Divine Service and Sermons, and to receive Sacraments, have Christenengs and buryings of dead soe often as was occasion. That the chappell hath always been repaired at the proper costs and charges of the inhabitants of the said hamblets of Preston and Langley; only in consideration thereof they have been of old praiseworthy, lawful, and prescriptive custom free and exempt from all repaires of the church of Hitchin, the inhabitants of Hitchin haveing allways repaired their own church. That about 14 or 15 years since, the said Chappell of Minsden being very much out of repaire, the Inhabitants of the said hambletts did amongst themselves raise a considerable sum of money in order to repair the same, which money was placed in the hands of 2 persons who died some short tyme after, and soe the money was Lost, and tho' severall materialls

were provided for repaires yet by rason of the said loss the work was discouraged until about 3 yeares since, about which tyme the Lord Bishop of Lincolne, having notice thereof, ordered the inhabitants of Preston and Langley to repaire the said Chappell, in obedience to which order the said hamblettors made a rate, and have proceeded soe far in the repaires as to lay on a new roofe; and one and all of them except Sir John Reade unanimously resolved to finish the same. But the said Sir John Reade, refusing to pay his rate to the said chapell, and endeavouring as much as in his power to discourage the said work, hath thereby encouraged the parishoners of Hitchin to rate all the said hamblettors to the repaires of Hitchin church; and, although your petitioners were never rated before to the church of Hitchin, yet the said parishoners of Hitchin brought 24 actions against the inhabitants of the said hambletts ' (484).

In the chapter on the Churchwardens (Vol. I, pp. 241–2) we have already followed in some detail the proceedings which the petition continues, almost tearfully, to relate. It is enough to remind the reader that the ' hamblettors,' having neither the money nor the influence of their opponents, were routed all along the line; losing their case before the Archdeacon of Huntingdon, before the Lords Commissioners at St. Albans, and again on a rehearing before the Lords Commissioners at Doctors' Commons. Two of the petitioners, John Holton and John Farr, refusing to obey the Orders of the Court, had been first adjudged ' to be contumacious in conduct ' and then ' signified, excommunicated and cast into prison ' (484). Betrayed by Sir John Reade, the Lord of their own Manor, abandoned by their Bishop, unprotected even by St. Nicholas, the protector of the innocent and poor, the remaining ' hamblettors ' bowed to the inevitable. For the future they would pay their dues under protest to St. Mary's, and leave their own chapel of ill-ease to go to rack and ruin. By 1690 they are pleased to be able to send an exaggerated report to the archdeacon that ' the Chapel is now totally Ruinated, stripped, uncovered, decayed and dimolished ' (484. 54).

It had been some little comfort to them to see Sir John Reade also going to rack and ruin. One after another *his* petitions were rejected just as theirs had been. Year after year he presented himself at Court, ' praying in consideration of the sufferings and cruelties I endured in Ireland to be granted £6,000 or £600 per annum for interest till that were paid '; a petition that his

daughter, Elizabeth Reade, 'being in great distress,' was still presenting to a callous sovereign and an empty Treasury after Sir John was dead. It pleased them also to see their oppressor being oppressed in his turn for refusing to serve as Sheriff. The fines imposed upon him for his 'contumacious conduct' ran into thousands of pounds, to avoid payment of which he was forced 'to withdraw 80 miles from his mansion house' (viii). But most of all they exulted in his discomfiture at the hands of his second wife. By his first wife, Susanne, the daughter of Sir Thomas Style, he had five sons and four daughters. By his second wife, Dame Alissimon, the widow of the Hon. Francis Pierrepont, he had a fortune of £8,000; but he treated her as if she were a pauper. For years she endured his indignities and his desertions; and then she turned on him. To the Minsden 'hamblettors' it was satisfying to see him losing the day in Court after Court after Court. She sued him for alimony in the Court of Arches and won. He appealed to the Delegates and again she won. She haled her husband before the King, and she carried him up to the House of Lords. When he printed his pamphlet: *A True State of the Case between Sir John Reade and Dame Alissimon his wife*, she 'conceived herself bound in defence of her honour to Invalid such Libels,' and printed a broadsheet for all the world to see. With the 'corroboration of sworn witnesses,' she answers him point by point. The 'songs' he had accused her of making about him were 'only some mournful complaints to God taken out of the Scripture (as he—"a right godly man," so called—ought to have recognized) and suitable to that afflicted condition in which he kept her.' If she had 'compared his barbarous, inhuman actions towards her to those of a churlish Nabal or tiger she had not been out of the way; but she did never call him any of those names as he alledged.' It was not true that she had deserted him. On the contrary she had 'often begged reconciliation with him, when his unchristian answer was "she might as well persuade him to forsake Jesus Christ," and again, "he should think himself damned if he did not forsake her."' He had boasted of the integrity of his witnesses, but 'most of those names are persons

viii. He was nominated Sheriff in 1671, 1673, 1676 and 1677. The fine of £500 imposed in 1673 was granted to trustees, 'in trust for Dame Alissimon, the wife of Sir John, whom he has refused to maintain.' In 1676 a Colonel Carter applied in advance 'for a grant of the fine that shall be imposed on him.'

he hath a great power over, and may be more than he should over some of the females.'

Having disposed of his *True State of the Case*, she proceeds to substantiate her own. Even in the early days of their marriage he ' used to lay a charged pistol under his pillow in bed with her in the night.' Before long he had ' turned her out of doors, sold her Household Stuff and deprived her of her jewells.' Whilst he slept sumptuously in the great chamber, he ' constrained her to lodge in an out-room where corn and wool used to be kept, made her wash her own clothes, and said he would keep only such servants as would be offensive to her.' To that end ' he bolstered up a dirty wench in the house against her lady and animated her in gross affronts to her person.' He had denied her admittance to his mansion house, or to any other of his houses in Hertfordshire; and in answer to her entreaties he had ' threatened to bring her lower yet, that she should be his vassal and prisoner and that all her good days with him were gone ' (483).

IV

We may leave this matrimonial cause, which only ended when Death, the King of King's Proctor, intervened, and notice two ecclesiastical causes which soon afterwards affected Minsden Chapel. In the first of these, dated 1700, Joseph Arnold of Langley was sued by John Heath, as Chapel Warden of Minsden, ' for violently taking and carrying away the chapell font.' As the font was useful to Arnold ' as a sink in his dwellinghouse,' and as he would neither return it nor pay the costs of the action, he was ' cited and monished to appeare in the churche of Hitchin, there to see and heare himselfe excommunicated ' (484. 201). A brief experience as an outcast, however, was sufficient to bring him to his knees. The author possesses the original of the absolution he afterwards received: ' I absolve you from the excommunication pronounced against you and restore you to the Church in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' In the second cause John Heath himself was the party ' cited and monished.' Since the long and bitter struggle with St. Mary's, he had not been the churchman he once professed to be. Moreover, like many others in the hamlet, he had a fellow-feeling for those poor Baptists and Independents whom the Church had been hunting like foxes from place to

place. They might not hold the views which he as chapel-warden ought to hold, but they were men of God assuredly; and some of them, like their Divine Master, had not where to lay their heads. In 1701, therefore, when Daniel Skingle, a hedge-preacher of this district (ix), asked if he might bring his little flock of people into the shelter of Minsden Chapel, Heath saw no harm in it. The chapel was hardly ever used, and it would be like old times to have a sermon there again. With Heath's permission Skingle preached there weekly, and soon had not only his own people to the number of 300, but the church people of Minsden listening with both ears. Those of them who were wont to sleep in St. Mary's under Vicar Bragge were astonished. They had not heard it after this fashion before.

In the course of time a rumour reached Francis Bragge. For years he had been trying to lay Skingle by the heels. This man, as he had heard his fellow magistrates declare at Quarter Sessions, was a ' notorious Dissenter and utterly disaffected to the government.' Now was the chance to make an end of him, for, ' seduced by a Malignant Spiritt,' he had ' infringed the liberties of the Church and brought great Scandall to the Reformed Religion.' At first the Vicar's efforts were unfruitful. No one in Skingle's congregation would betray him. The only result was that the services were held more secretly than before. At last, however, Bragge hit upon the ingenious plan of getting one of his servants to call upon Skingle under the pretence that he was under deep conviction of sin. By this method, ' drawing Mr. Skingle into free discourse, the spy got out of him the particulars of his preaching at the said chapel.' Thereupon Skingle was thrown into the Spiritual Court; where, after expending about £300 in a useless defence, he and Chapel-warden Heath were glad enough to get clear by making the following

ix. Appointed Vicar of Essendon during the Commonwealth. Ejected in 1662. He subsequently attached himself to the Hertford Independent Church, which ' approved his gift of prophesynge,' and resolved that ' he be prayed for and allowed of, with a promise of leavynge his callinge and giving himself wholly to it.' But as time went on the members there grew less happy about his conduct. They felt that the little bands of worshippers he had gathered about himself at Braughing, Munden and Datchworth ought to be brought into the fold and under the discipline of the Hertford church. ' All circumstances considered, we do not see that Mr. Skingles practis in administering the ordinance to the few he hath at Braughing can be justified by Scripture; and therefore we have no authority from Christ to give our Brethren leave to join in that irregular practis.' Ejected from the Hertford church, he formed one of his own at Datchworth and continued as its pastor until his death.

submissions: 'I Daniel Skingle of the parish of Munden Magna in the County of Hertford do acknowledge and confess to have committed a great fault by taking upon me to preach contrary to the law in the Chapel of Minsden, within the parish of Hitchin, and do beg the right reverend father in God, James, Lord Bishop of Lincoln, his pardon, and all others offended thereat; and do promise that I will not committ or do the like for the future. As witness my hand this 20th day of December, 1700' (x). On Sunday, November 23rd, John Heath was required to make this abject apology in Hitchin Church: 'Whereas I, John Heath, Chapel-warden of Minsden, a member of this church, have, contrary to the duty and dignity of my office, which I was sworn to observe and execute, permitted and suffered Daniel Skingle, a mere layman and in a lay habit, to preach or rather profane the holy Word of God in the Chapel of Minsden; and did also invite and encourage him to the repetition of such his illegal and unwarrantable practices, and have thereby violated the solemn oath I took for the performance of my office, and have given great offence to the church in general, and to this church, and the minister and parishoners of this parish in particular; I am therefore by the command of my Ordinary's own letter to make this acknowledgement, which I heartily and willingly submit to, and do in the presence of Almighty God and this congregation unfeignedly confess my said fault and the *Great Sin* I have thereby committed against God, and the offence I have given to the Church in general, and to this Church, and minister and people in particular; and I beseech God and you all to forgive me, and to join with me in prayer for the assistance of His Holy Spirit that I may have a due regard to my duty for the future.' And then, repeating the Lord's Prayer, he concluded (484. 209–210; 492).

x. The account given by Richard Gough, the antiquary (1735–1809), in a MS. note to a copy of Salmon's *History of Hertfordshire* now in the Bodleian, varies in some particulars: 'The poor man apprehending no ill consequence told him all honestly and freely. Mr. Bragge, notwithstanding the civility of his expressions, put him soon after into a court where no civility was to be expected. The unhappy man, being poor and not able to pay costs, was detained in the vexatious suits of that court a long time. I think I have been told to the time of his death. This I had from Mr. James of Hitchin, who knew the whole affair' (489).

V

The sermons of Skingle, the Independent, were the last to be preached at Minsden Chapel; but for a time marriages were still performed. They are entered, not as before in the Minsden Register, but in that of Hitchin. It is surprising to see how numerous they grew. As the Chapel itself fell asunder the people chose more and more to be joined together there in holy matrimony. For a hundred years or so it had been considered fashionable, if not a little romantic, to walk out Chapelfoot way and have a country wedding. The best people had done it. There in 1629 Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Edward Radcliffe, had married John Ivory, a clerk in Holy Orders. There in 1630 Thomas Kidner, another clerk in Holy Orders, afterwards vicar of Hitchin, had married Grace Young, widow. There in 1636 William Lindall, D.D., another vicar of Hitchin, had married Elizabeth Peirce, his predecessor's widow. But it is from about 1690 that the fashion spread. By that time the worst people did it. 'To this day,' notes a writer of the period, 'people out of superstition or frolick are sometimes married in these ruins.' For fastidious people the chapel was becoming almost too romantic, though one observes the marriage of Sir John Barrington, baronet, to Susan Draper, daughter of the Steward of Hitchin Manor, in 1697; and that of James Carter, described as 'Attorney at law of Furnivall's Inn,' to Elizabeth Lucas in 1703 (481). But many a bashful couple of the humbler sort and many a shy widow were glad of this secluded churchlet hidden in the wood, where the chief witnesses and the sole choristers were the ringdoves crooning in those elms whose boughs could be seen swaying to and fro through the yawning holes in the roof. It was not until 1738 that the Bishop of Lincoln refused to sanction any further marriages. It was certainly time for him to intervene. At the last marriage of all—that between Enoch West and Mary Horn on July 11th that year—a piece of masonry fell and dashed the service book out of the curate's hand (53).

It has been remarked by a modern writer that 'this chapel like King Charles II was an unconscionable time dying' (67. 189); and, indeed, to those who love the place it is almost painful to trace in successive histories the stages of its decline. If it had been allowed to die in peace, the pity of it would have

been bearable. We should have shed no tears for a natural dissolution. To sink down into this cool quietness of trees, to be softly surrounded with glimmering phantasies of foliage, branching forth and drooping into rest, to dream the last dreams in this home of wild flowers, bright-hearted birds, and 'those sweet-minded things which live where silence is'—this would be not to die but to pass deliciously from peace to peace.

It has not been the good fortune of Minsden Chapel to have an end so easy. Of Alice Perrers, the mistress of Edward III and the lady of Hitchin Manor, it has been said that she stole the rings from her royal lover's fingers as he lay dying upon his bed. That may or may not be true. But of the dying Minsden it may be safely affirmed that those who should have protected her have been the first to plunder the few treasures she possessed. Her dissolution has been hastened by the sacrilegious hands of her unnatural children. One reads of Jeremiah Godfrey in 1690 'unlawfully taking into his hands and possession four hundred *libras plumbi*, *anglice* 400 pounds weight of lead, appertaining to the said chapel and that a hundredweight of the said lead is of the value of 12 shillings of lawful money' (182. 59). One hears of others taking cart-loads of stone and sound oak away for the repair and decoration of their cottages; with no churchwarden at hand, like John Heath, to bring them to book. One finds them aiding and abetting strangers to do the same. 'There were formerly three bells belonging to this chapel,' writes William Dunnage (28. 319); 'the removal of two of them is handed to me in the following singular manner. As a person of the name of John Reason of the parish of St. Paul's Walden was returning home from Hitchin Market about the year 1725, he was very much alarmed when he arrived in the vicinity of Hitch Wood by a great noise of men behind him, having with them horses and a carriage. From the lumbering noise that was occasioned by their going very fast, he conjectured they had removed the bells from the steeple of the chapel. When he left them they proceeded in the direction of Harpenden. What confirmed him in the opinion of the above circumstance was that the bells were soon after missed from the steeple. What became of the third bell is not known' (xi). This report 'handed'

xi. S. B. Chittenden of Horsham writes: 'The late Mr. Cook, senior, of Little Almshoe, told me forty years ago that one of his barns went by the name of Bell-barn in consequence of the stolen bell finding a resting-place in it for a night previous to its final removal' (Letter to the *Herts Express*, July 29, 1918).

to Dunnage finds some corroboration in the contemporary manuscript *History of Hitchin* by Isaac James, who says: 'I heard my mother say that the thieves turned the shoes of the horses on their return from the Chapel that their course might not be traced' (21. 243).

OLD BOWSTOCK

In 1814 Dunnage made this careful 'admeasurement' of the ruins:—

	ft.	ins.
'Thickness of the wall of the Tower west end	2	6
The Tower—square inside	18	–
Wall between Belfry & Chapel	2	6
Chapel from Belfry to nave (width 21 feet)	38	–
Wall between nave and Chancel	2	–
Chancel from Nave to East Window (width 15 feet)	25	–
Thickness of wall at East end	2	–
Total length	90 feet'	

'The nave columns and arch,' he continues, 'still remain and parts of the wall right and left; also the dimensions (*sic*) of the East window and one of the side windows and doorway on the south-west side. On the north side of the Chapel near the Nave is the only vestige of Antiquity remaining; it consists of a niche in the wall, at the bottom of which is cut a figure in stone.' It was a pity he drew attention to it; before a year was out this 'last vestige' had gone the way of the rest (28. 317).

Sometimes the robbers or receivers had the effrontery to

sell these stolen goods by auction. 'Some fine specimens of painted glass,' writes William Lucas in his diary under 1832, 'are now exhibiting in the great room at the Sun, and are offered on liberal terms to this parish to be put up in the church, if they have spirit enough to buy them' (24). Some of the glass was recognized as having come from Minsden; but no one seemed to care, and no one had the money or the benevolence to buy. With just the same effrontery and immunity old Bowstock, who wore a squashed chimney-pot hat and was anything you might ask him to be, used in the eighteen-forties to take his donkey-cart to Minsden, dislodge and bring away a load of worked clunch, and sell it in Hitchin Market right under the vicar's nose. What little he left of the tracery work of the windows was said to have been appropriated by the people of St. Ippolyts, who were restoring their church (1840) and wished to have an east window exactly like that at Minsden. To be the more exact, they took the materials as well as the design (xii) (493).

VI

For many a year now Minsden has been left in peace. Falling amongst thieves, stripped of its raiment, lying by the wayside half-dead—St. Mary's Wardens, those proud Levites, passing by on the other side—there is nothing for the chapel but to die. Here, as with the neighbouring church of Chesfield, which was abandoned by order of the Church at the same period, 1750, the ravages of time have almost completed the destruction. The whole is overgrown with ivy, giving it a picturesque and wild effect. Enshrouding the remains is a dense mass of dishevelled undergrowth, and encompassing that again, as it were an outer coffin, is a belt of time-worn and decaying elms, some of them uprooted by the storms and still lying where they fell (xiii). There is about it all a strangely wistful air of desolation.

xii. May I interpolate here that the ruined chapel now belongs to me; for my life, at least. I have these many years past leased it from the vicars of Hitchin. Let trespassers and sacrilegious persons take warning, for I will proceed against them with the utmost rigour of the law. Furthermore, if, as is possible, I am buried there, I will endeavour in all ghostly ways to protect and haunt its hallowed walls.

xiii. This chapter was written in 1926. Most of the fallen and half-fallen trees were removed in 1927; and the undergrowth, then fifteen feet high and completely obscuring the ruins, was cleared away.

THE MINSDEN GHOST

From a photograph by T. W. Latchmore, 1907

' 'Tis now the raven's bleak abode;
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad;
And there the fox securely feeds;
And there the poisonous adder breeds,
Conceal'd in ruins, moss and weeds;
While, ever and anon, there falls
Huge heaps of hoary mouldered walls ' (xiv).

These are the Lords of Minsden now. These are the present wardens of the Chapel. Once or twice a year, perhaps, the dominion of silence will be broken by a sudden tumult of wings. Some noisy son of Adam will come forcing his way into this sanctuary and look with astonishment about him. But the perpetual twilight of this mournful place makes him uneasy. He feels a hundred eyes upon him. The very silence is hostile. Minsden is not for him. On All Hallows Eve a few years ago a number of earnest people visited the ruins at midnight to see if haply they could surprise the Minsden ghost, the cowled apparition whose form can be faintly discerned in the photograph that fronts this page. Unhappily it was they who were surprised by an equally earnest custodian of the law, who would not be denied in his suspicion that they were ' night walkers ' or such as should be searched under the Poaching Prevention Act of 1874. It was an ignominious end to a grave and scientific expedition (xv).

Minsden is not for these. It is for those, rather, whose minds are in ruins; for those sons of quietness who are distracted by the crimes and follies and misfortunes of mankind. In its deep shade many have found healing (xvi) and consolation and repose. ' They are one with the twilight's dream':—

xiv. From *Grongar Hill*, by John Dyer, published in 1727.

xv. ' I visited the ruined chapel three times,' writes Elliott O'Donnell to me. ' On the first occasion I was accompanied by several other people. One of the party was a professional medium, but she met with no success. On our way back we were stopped by the police. My second visit was alone, and I did feel extraordinarily uncanny at times. I was conscious of something close beside me, scrutinizing me, although I neither saw nor heard anything. On the third occasion, also on an All Hallows Eve, I was again with friends, and some excitement was caused by lights, presumably magnesium, being set off under our noses. Also we found a sheet in a bush, so concluded that someone was trying to play us a foolish practical joke. . . . On the whole I am inclined to think there is truth in the legend of the Minsden ghost.'

xvi. I know four quite ordinary people who carry flints from Minsden Chapel about with them wherever they go. One of them ascribed her recovery from a serious illness entirely to the healing power of the talisman beside her bed.

'For here the ancient Mother lingers
To dip her hands in the diamond dew,
And lave thine ache with cloud-cool fingers
Till sorrow die from you.'

Perhaps more than any other it is the sons of Apollo who come to muse on Minsden Hill. There has been a goodly, if not a glorious, company of them to praise this ruined Parnassus; for, maltsters, fellmongers, farmers and shopkeepers though we be, we also have had our poets and we have them still (xvii). It is here if anywhere that their tongues have been unloosed and they have learned to sing; singing, indeed, with such elegiac profusion that by now the last note of sentiment has been drawn out. If the author may judge from the forty poems on Minsden in his collection, it is a place propitious for poetry. It is not only that

'No noise is here or none that hinders thought';

the very air at Minsden is tremulous with that faint *susurrus*—call it the undersong of earth, the music of the spheres, the sigh of departed time, or what you will—which only the more finely attuned spirits overhear:—

'Stillness accompanied with sound so soft
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments.'

For those who have had ears to hear it has been enough to hearken to the ruinated windows and riddled walls as they

'murmur to the breeze's call
The night wind's lovely vesper hymn.'

Listening to such music, they, too, have lisped in numbers, for the numbers came:—

'The far soft syllabing of things forgot
Long, long ago, that sing how simply in the sleep of thought.'

Forty moralizing poems on Minsden ruins would surfeit any reader. But as an example we will print some lines composed

xvii. The author has in preparation an *Anthology of Hitchin Verse* selected from the works of fifty local poets.

about 1750 by one Wallis, an usher of the school founded at Hitchin by the Rev. Edward Hickman:—

ON THE RUINS OF MINSDEN OR MINZELL CHAPEL'

The rising sun had chased the shades of night
And each obscuring mist had fled the light,
The cooling zephyrs gently as they passed
Stirred every leaf and bent the tender grass.
Perfuming odours rose, the warblers sung,
And with their music all the valleys rung.
Charmed with the pleasing prospect of the fields,
To taste the pleasure which their beauty yields,
To breathe the sweetness of the morning air
I leave the town and to the plain repair.
A mouldering structure then appeared in view,
Around whose top the creeping ivy grew,
Once a fair church adorned with curious art,
In crumbling stone now dropping part from part;
While thorns and briars, interwoven round,
Vie with its top, and fill the desert ground,
Denying entrance to the curious eye,
To view the graves that underneath them lie.
While thus my thoughts with meditation glow,
And thus my words in mournful accents flow:—
'Is this the place where numerous footsteps trod,
Where living votaries filled the House of God;
Where the full chorus of the sounding choir
Bid one loud strain of prayer and praise aspire?
How silent now the desolated spot,
Its paths untrodden and its use forgot.
Of noxious reptiles now the haunted scene,
Hung with cold dews, and clad with baleful green
All day the redbreast mournful ditty sings;
With mournful ditties, plaintive echo rings;
And birds (xviii) ill-omened at the day's decline
With boding sounds profane the hallowed shrine;
While mournful shadows stretched along the plains
Move with the wind and scare benighted swains.
Just such is man, when vig'rous youth is fled,
And feeble age has silvered o'er his head;
Downward he sinks, deserted and forlorn,
Of all he meets the pity and the scorn;

xviii. When Wallis's lines first came to be printed, the long-suffering compositor substituted 'bards' for birds. I suspect it was done deliberately. It was too good a chance to miss. When Tennyson remarked, apropos of smoking, that the first pipe in the morning was the best, Sir William Harcourt, slyly misquoting one of the poet's well-known lines, was heard to say, 'the earliest pipe of half-awakened bard.'

None haunt his dwelling save the reptile race,
Who hope his fortune or expect his place;
Yet shall he rise and mount the realms of day,
Where youth immortal shall no more decay (488).

That little community of farming folk we read of in Domesday: the serfs, the villeins, the cottars, all so busily at work upon their plough-lands, their pastures, and their cattle, is now another world away. Only a few yellowing parchments keep their memory alive. No reeve comes nowadays to measure out the works on the demesne; no steward holds his court of Minsden-bury; no jurors present encroachments on the common. Where *is* Minsden common now? And where is the manor house? And what has become of all those copyhold crofts and tofts and tenements that clustered round Minsden Hill?

For the historian there is nothing more to say. It is for the poets to take up the tale. And even they can do little more in their dirge-like way than chant that word 'mournful' which Wallis tolls no less than four times in his forty lines, as if he would have us hear the chapel of St. Nicholas of Minsden ringing its own knell. It is only a man of the old faith and a master in the craft of words—one such as Lionel Johnson—who can by the sole enchantment of his verse rebuild these downcast walls, set up once more the ancient timbered roof, and make us see the hovering host of angels in fair carven figures, with sackbut and psaltery and all kinds of music praising the Holiest in the height. Under such a poet's spell the pestilent ivy, the hurtful nettle, the congregation of elders disappear. All is swept and garnished as of old. By miracle or magic the long-lost windows start into their place. The light that pours with so subdued a splendour through their painted glass gleams on the 'crosse of copper with its cloth of sarcenet,' wakens to life the brasses of Dauntesey and Langford, and rests almost tenderly upon the effigy of Dame Margerie Astrye where she sleeps so straight and still within her private chapel. One hears, or seems to hear, a drift of sacred music from the choir; and clouds of frankincense come sweeping down the nave. In the half-glow of the altar lights one sees or seems to see the ghostly figure of a priest with eyes uplifted as in adoration and with supplicating hands outspread. The holy words he utters hush themselves, as if in awe, before a mystery too deep for words. Suddenly the 'litel bell,' the *sanctus* bell, of Minsden rings. There is a sound as of many

worshippers falling to their knees. Once again in Minsden Chapel the solemn Eucharist is said.

'Sadly the dead leaves rustle in the whistling wind,
Around the weather-worn gray church, low down the vale;
The Saints in golden vesture shake before the gale;
The glorious windows shake, where still they dwell enshrined;
Old Saints by long-dead shrivelled hands long since designed;
There still, although the world autumnal be, and pale,
Still in their golden vesture the old saints prevail;
Alone with Christ, desolate else, left by mankind.
Only one ancient Priest offers the Sacrifice,
Murmuring holy Latin immemorial:
Swaying with tremulous hands the old censer full of spice,
In gray, sweet incense clouds; blue, sweet clouds mystical:
To him, in place of men, for he is old, suffice
Melancholy remembrances and vesperal.'

THE LOST BELLS

THE BAPTISTS (i)

WITH A NOTE UPON THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE THEM TO PREPARE THE WAY.

I

F one were asked to say who were the prime movers of Nonconformity in this parish, the answer, however unexpected, would have to be Ralph Radcliffe, schoolmaster, playwright and squire of Hitchin Priory, 1519–1559, and Richard Chambers, vicar of St. Mary's from 1570–1593. In the times before them there had been Lollards in plenty in these parts. Peter Stokes, whom Wyclif nicknamed 'the little white dog,' had barked at them from his kennel in the Carmelite convent here, barked at them vigorously in sermons and in books (*supra*, Vol. I, pp. 135–137). But their heresies had been hunted out, or rather burnt out, long before the Reformation. In this neighbourhood, at least, not a trace of their dissidence survived. Following them, as one may see from the Bishop's visitations of the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, there were plenty of sober-minded people within the fold of the Church who were thinking hard and beginning to murmur about the lives of the clergy, and 'those which under a certain feigned colour of sanctitie come to you in the clothes of the schepe, and inwardly they be ravening wolves' (269. 22). But such was the habit of obedience to those in ecclesiastical authority that no one opened his mouth against these growing abuses. Not even in the ferment of the Reformation is there a solitary voice to be heard.

In 1543, however, at the instigation of his patron, Henry VIII, there came to Hitchin Priory one Ralph Radcliffe, who in the University of Cambridge had been speaking out to some purpose. It was a way he had. His writings show him to have been a man of decided opinions, and one who, being himself heart and soul

i. I have to thank Dr. W. T. Whitley, Editor of the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* and author *inter alia* of *A History of British Baptists*, for reading this chapter in manuscript, and for making many valuable suggestions.

From a drawing by George Newton, based on a painting by Samuel Lucas

for the Reformation, had resolved to help on the good work by exposing the sloth and deadness of the clergy. In the morality plays which he wrote for his boys to perform each year before a mixed audience of courtiers from London, dons from Cambridge, and parents and all sorts and conditions of people from Hitchin, there is no mincing of words (269). The pageant of sacerdotalism and superstition, tricked out in due liturgical array, moves sumptuously across the stage. The poor Church, clad in plain homespun, is dazzled and deceived by the proud bearing and the glozing speech of these 'hypocrytes in high places.' But the Fool sees them as they really are, and out of his mouth, by a device which was to prove so useful to dramatists in later days, proceed those stinging truths which the playwright himself would not have dared to utter: 'As for curates and vycares, what thyng should they preache? They be almost unknowing theire letters and starke foolys. I have often times seen olde women better lernyd' (269. 4).

In another scene he breaks out upon their 'pride of life,' their greed and covetousness: 'As touching the charge of ther flocke and of ther soolys [i.e. souls], they care no more than they do for frogges in the fen; it is enough so that they have sheryd ther woolle and have shaven them to the skynne' (269. 6). He draws a lively picture of them no longer 'feeding their lambs,' but fleecing them for the uttermost farthing of their tithes. He scorns them for spending in riotous living the substance they have frightened out of the faithful; and grudging even a moment for the instruction of Christian folk in the *Paternoster*, the *Ave Maria*, the Catechism and the Creed. And then, proceeding with his catalogue of priestly crime, he declaims at full voice what the others were only whispering to those whom they could trust: 'There be manye,' he asserts, 'which kepe the familyes of their nevewes, for *so* they are wont to call their sonnes. They that live in matrimonye can take no hede to ther wyfes for them . . . others be dronken and wallowe in ther pleasures daye and nyght . . . you shall fynde many with a fatte belye, with a face full of carbunkelles and saffyres, wyth a nose set with perle, wyth red eyes and a stomake stretched abrode' (269. 8).

It would be more than uncharitable—it would be manifestly wrong—to assume that the clergy were habitually or even frequently as lax as those here satirized; but the Fool could have cited plenty of ecclesiastical censure for his purpose. To the wise man who

created him the outlook for religion seemed dark indeed. Radcliffe says deliberately in the conclusion of his play: 'Except there be founde a remedye quyckly for so great a plage [i.e. plague], the matter is dasshed of Christian pytie, the dye is caste of the savegarde of soolys' (269. 10).

II

With even greater courage, and possibly not less dramatic effect, the Protestant (one might almost say Puritan) (ii) cause was being maintained in the parish church. For in 1546, when the Bishop was complaining that only one sermon had been preached in St. Mary's in the space of six months (iia), Nicholas Dyer, one of the assistant priests, undertook a course of sermons which must have made the Bishop sorry he had spoken. From the proceedings against him it is clear that Dyer had set his mind steadfastly against the Mariolatry and Image-worship which had been growing up for more than a century, and to such a degree that devout men felt that they could no longer pray to the Son of God for the intervening presence of His Mother and a whole multitude of saints. 'To the grave peril of your soul and to the evil example of others,' says the Bishop, 'you have not done or fulfilled that which every curate is bound and constrained of right and by laudable custom long used and observed to do, namely, to announce and declare to his parishioners every Lord's Day the days of fasts and vigils of the Blessed Mary and all the Saints pertaining to that week' (497).

The Bishop was at one time hopeful that it was 'carelessness, negligence or ignorance' only which had made Dyer thus remiss; but he was quickly undeceived. 'To the great scandal of the parishoners there,' Dyer had the audacity to declare in St. Mary's pulpit, 'that ther be more Idolles in the towne than Christen men'; and on another occasion he said, 'Itt is nott mencyoned in the scripture that anye man is bounde to faste'; and, further-

ii. The N.E.D. gives 1567 for the earliest use of the word: 'About that tyme were many congregations of the Ana-baptists in London who cawlyd themselves Puritans or Unspottyd Lambs of the Lord.'—Stow's *Chronicle*.

iia. A similar complaint had been made in 1536, and, as I think, rather unfairly. At any rate, Henry Malet, who was an assistant priest at St. Mary's, writes that very year: 'My only comfort is to preach every holy-day here in Hitchen and hereabouts, and so do the Lord some service' (L. & P., Hen. VIII, vol. xi. 596).

more and finally, he did ' openly and publicly assert and preach these words, " that holye breade and holye water kannot be founde [i.e. in Scripture] and that it doth nott proffite anye man " ' (497. 72–3). For these offences, and for bringing ' several illicit preachers to preach ' false doctrine, insomuch that ' the public voice and report have been busy and still are busy with them in the parish of Hichyn and other neighbouring and surrounding places,' Nicholas Dyer was excommunicated and cast out, ' until such time as he shall return to the bosom of Holy Mother Church' (497. 77d–78).

Though Dyer was silenced by his Bishop and Radcliffe was silenced by death (iii), the words which they had uttered were not allowed to die. Another vicar of Hitchin was soon to rise up and carry on their work. Richard Chambers, who was appointed to the living in 1570, was the son of that Richard Chambers who had done so much for the English Protestants exiled at Frankfort in Mary's reign (iv), and had himself been a pupil of Thomas Cartwright, the Champion of English Puritanism (v), ' than whom,' wrote Beza, ' I think the sun does not see a more learned man ' (559. 800–8). By 1573 the new vicar was already in trouble with his bishop (498). He is described as ' not conformable,' and, when called upon as a suspected person, would acknowledge neither the thirty-nine Articles nor the Prayer-book as revised (559. 634). It is of him and three other ' recusants ' that the Bishop complains to his archdeacon in 1583, as men who endeavour to alienate Her Majesty's subjects ' to the liking and following of sondrie Phantasticall Inventiones of their owne ' (79. 4. 330). He will not obey the Injunctions about vestments, and is discovered collecting money for the relief of the Protestants in Geneva, ' those godlie people trobled

iii. Aged only forty, in 1559. Amongst his morality plays there is a touching dialogue, done in the style of *Everyman*, between ' Deth ' and ' The Goer by the Waye,' in which one seems to hear the cry of the dying playwright himself (269. 76):—

GOER BY THE WAYE. Do you kyll wyse men?

DETH. Solomon is dead.

GOER BY THE WAYE. Wyll you kyll with your hatchet me a young man?

DETH. I kyll the younge with the olde.'

iv. Before going into exile he had for a time lived in Hitchin in a house which, it is interesting to see, he purchased from Ralph Radcliffe.

v. ' A native of Hertfordshire,' says the D.N.B., but Urwick in his *Nonconformity in Herts*, pp. 800–803, has proved conclusively that he was born at Royston, twelve miles distant from Hitchin. Between the Dissenting churches of these two towns there has always been the closest communion.

for the gospel of Jesus Christ' (vi). At last, in 1592, the Bishop plucked Chambers from his benefice at Hitchin, but he was to remain a thorn in the episcopal flesh. Putting himself at the head of the Puritan clergy of the archdeaconry, he gave his superior no peace. He 'trobled' him without ceasing. As late as 1604 one sees him deputed with two more of the Hertfordshire clergy to beard the Bishop in his den at Buckden, and protest against the Canons issued in that year, some of which condemned the 'wicked errors' of Puritan Schismatics in plain, unmeasured terms (79. 4. 332). From the Bishop, as might have been expected, they got no satisfaction. They must either read the Canons in their churches, he said, or be deprived. They then appealed to the King, and drew a pathetic picture of the way in which they were continually being tossed to and fro between the Bishop and the Archdeacon and the Commissary and the Registrar, all of whom were bent upon their ruin. In order to be rid of them James tossed them back to their Bishop again, and suggested that they should hold another conference with him at Huntingdon; but the proposal came to nothing because Chambers insisted that it should be an open conference and that the proceedings should be published, to neither of which would the Bishop agree (79. 4. 332).

III

It was a time of great ferment, for Puritanism was then in its birth-throes. It had been hoped so ardently that the new King would prove the defender of the new faith. Many of the clergy round about Hitchin, 'groaning under a common burden of rites and ceremonies,' had signed the Millenary Petition presented to James on his way to London (April 4, 1604). Asking in particular that they should not be 'excommunicated as heretofore for trifles and twelve-penny matters,' they point out that they are all 'Ministers of the Gospell and desire not a disorderly innovation but a due and godly reformation' (79. 4. 332). In the following winter (November 6, 1604) they actually waylaid him whilst hunting in the neighbourhood of Royston, and presented this further petition: 'Most gracious and undoubted sovereign, in most humble wise we your loyal subjects of the

vi. There was a royal brief issued for this in 1583. But the Bishop of Lincoln gave no blessing to it, and those priests who preached for it were privately marked down as disaffected.

parishes near adjacent do most earnestly upon our knees beseech and intreat your most excellent Majesty. That whereas in the days of our late deceased sovereign of happy memory, and until this time also under your Highness' most blessed government, we have enjoyed the great benefit of faithful Pastors, through whose ministry we have been taught, and brought from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God; by whose doctrine and example also we have been taught and trained up, as to give to God the things that are God's, so in like sort to give unto Caesar that which unto him belongeth. But now (dear Sovereign) those worthy lights are in part extinguished, and we gravely threatened to be deprived of the remnant that are left, unless your sacred Majesty, who only is our hope of help upon earth, do, out of the bowels of your compassion to the souls of us and our posterity, stretch out your royal authority for our relief; not suffering us to be committed unto idle shepherds that cannot feed us, or careless shepherds who aim only at the gain of the fleece and neglect the safety of the flock. If but the loss (dear Sovereign) extended but to our bodies and goods, we would with silence and cheerfulness prostrate them at your Majesty's feet to do you service; but, alas! through the want of them (i.e. the pastors) the souls of us and our posterity are exposed to certain and inevitable ruin, according to the saying of Solomon, " when vision faileth then the people perish." Hearken, therefore (most gracious Sovereign), to the hearty cries of us your humble suppliants, that, as we have praised God for your peaceable and happy entrance into this kingdom, so we may be further bound to pray to Him for the continuance of your excellent Majesty and your royal issue to reign over us till the appearing of Christ Jesus ' (499).

For their ' disorderly interference ' with His Majesty's divine right of hunting, ten of the eight-and-twenty Puritans who presented this petition were haled before the Council. The rest received their answer from their ' only hope on earth ' at the Conference called at Hampton Court: ' I shall make them conform themselves, or I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse.'

It is from this time forward that one observes a change in the temper of these ' humble suppliants.' They were not minded to be harried out of the land or conformed against their will. If the King chose to harden his heart, they could harden theirs

also. Pains and penalties notwithstanding, the numbers steadily increase of such as 'absent themselves from the parochial way of worship.'

With those 'worthy lights,' their deprived pastors, they withdraw themselves more and more for 'prophesyings' in dark and secret places. From godly men disguised as Lecturers they listen to sermons which their 'idle shepherds' had not the learning to preach. But this was not for long. In 1615 Laud was appointed to the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, in which at that time Hitchin lay; and all men said it was his malign influence which led the King, in 1622, to issue the declaration 'concerning preachers,' whereby 'no preacher under the degree of a Bishop or Dean shall from henceforth presume to preach in any popular auditory the deep points of Predestination, Election, Reprobation, or the Universality, Efficacy, Resistability, or Irresistability of God's Grace, but leave those themes to be handled by learned men' (74. 4. 334). That meant the extinguishment of the 'worthy lights' and the suppression of Lecturers. It was no use to petition any more. The King was adamant. Besides, the memory was still fresh in men's minds of the awful fate of Edward Wightman, the Anabaptist, who had presented a petition to His Majesty—again at Royston—in 1611. For his opinions, too courageously declared, he had been burned at the stake—the last person to be burned for heresy in England. And 'Laud,' says Neile, who condemned him, 'was with me and assisted me in all the proceedings from the beginning to the end' (567. 112).

IV

Not being disposed to suffer martyrdom, or even bonds, for Laud's sake, the Hitchin Puritans either conformed or met in such secluded places that not even Laud's inquisitorial eyes could spy them out. For nearly fifteen years they lay so close that not one of them was caught. It was only after the Petition of Right, when the Commons and the common people were beginning to match their strength against the Crown, that they ventured to come out of their holes and hiding-places. At the Archdeacon's Court at Hitchin, on May 24, 1632, Richard Hodges of Tilehouse Street went so far as to say, 'This Court is called a Spiritual Court, but it is a Court of no conscience' (559. 635). In the year following the judge was horrified to learn that one of his

A VIEW UP TILEHOUSE STREET, 1868

own officials had become infected with Puritanical notions: ' 1635, April 29th, at Hitchin, the judge caused John Peters to be called in open court, and he not appearing, the Judge, for divers reasons him specially moving, did suspend the said Peters from his office of Apparitor and decreed that he should not hereafter be restored to it again ' (559. 635). On May 11, 1635, Thomas Parsons of Hitchin was fined ' for not paying 18d. to the repair of the church.' About the same time it was found necessary to command that the Book of Orders and Ceremonies should be observed at Hitchin, for ' some did not stand up at the Creed, nor bow to the altar, nor at the name of Jesus, nor receive the Sacrament upon their knees ' (vii). Also ' the Church and Church yard are quite out of order,' and the services are occasionally taken by ' Mr. Wood, an unlearned man and no graduate, but rather a weaver who was formerly questioned in the high Commission court and his orders were taken from him, but he hath gotten them again God knoweth how ' (501).

To get Mr. Wood discredited in the eyes of his people a plot was concocted between one Richard Hunt, a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and Jacob Twistleton, curate of Minsden Chapel. It was agreed that Hunt should ' contrive ' a seemingly innocent letter containing aspersions on Wood, and have it ' directed ' to William Burwell, a confederate, who ' is a carrier of maulte from Hitchin to London.' Then Burwell was ' to divulge, disperse, cast and deliver abroad the said Lybell to diverse and sundry his Majestie's subjects.' Amongst other charges and innuendoes it was alleged that so far from Wood having studied, as he said, for nine years at Dublin University, he had not been near that city; that so far from his having sprung from a good family in Lancashire he was a ' mere mechanicall person,' and had been ' a weaver and seller of fustians '; that he was ' one of the familists,' a man of evil life and conversation, and no fit man to be a minister in the Church of God; that he ' did usuallie resorte and walke into woods and pastures farre remote from any Towne, and was followed into those solitary places by many hundreds of the inhabitants of Hitchin both men and women '; that it was pitiful ' to see the people so misled and

vii. This refusal to kneel at the Sacrament was an old-standing offence. As far back as 1591 the Bishop had ordered Richard Chambers ' to confer with those at Hitchin that stande excommunicate to see if he can wynne them by exhortation to receive the Communion kneeling' (182. 73).

seduced' by a man 'who knew his calling no more than his horse did,' and yet had the 'impudence and arrogancy to say that the learned interpreters of the Church [i.e. the translators of the Authorized Version of 1611] had translated other wayes than the originall.'

By invoking the aid of Ralph Radcliffe, Wood was able to beard these lions in their den, seize some incriminating papers, and hale them before the Star Chamber, where he established his 'unspotted reputation' as a Lecturer and discomfited all his enemies (Star Chamber Proceedings, James I, 299, 13).

In the chapter on the Civil War (Vol. I, pp. 176–223) has been told the story of those Hitchin Puritans who, seven years later, took up arms in defence of the liberty of religious dissent. We need not go over those battlefields again. Here we are concerned only to point out the emergence of definite Baptist views from that army of zealots whom the ungodly chose to slander as 'hypocrites, dissemblers, holy-brethren, sermon-goers, pulpitarians, and Puritans.' Undoubtedly the first and foremost of the Hitchin Baptists was Henry Denne [for whom see Vol. I, p. 184], one of those fifteen Orthodox Divines whom Parliament appointed in 1642 to lecture at St. Mary's. This ardent spirit—whom Desborough, no mean judge, accounted 'the ablest man in the kingdom for prayers, expounding and preaching'—startled and scandalized his orthodox brethren at the outset, 1641, by repeating here in deadlier form an attack on infant baptism which had been prepared the previous year for the Bishop's visitation. It was in itself, he said, 'the quintessence of ten years' sermons.' Though 'contradicted by many of the auditors,' this preachment on *The Doctrine and Conversation of John Baptist* (345) made a profound impression; and when Denne followed the logic of his argument by resigning his lectureship and by professing himself openly as a Baptist and by being 'dipt,' he led away with him many whom his eloquence and reasoning had won. The Orthodox Divines got Rotheram of Ickleford to write a counterblast, *A Den of Thieves discovered, or certain errors and false doctrines delivered in a sermon by Henry Denne confuted, 1643*; and Samuel Chidley, for whom see above, vol. i, pp. 212–220, rushed into print on his own account with *A Christian Plea for Christians Baptisme, in which the lawfulnesse of Infants Baptisme is defended by sufficient grounds and reasons drawn from the sweet fountains of holy Scripture, 1644*. But

Denne could quote Scripture for his purpose just as well as they, and when it came to a trial, could do it in Hebrew and Latin and Greek. After the church doors were closed against him, he preached on in the churchyards, and when driven from there he preached on in farm-houses and barns and on many a village green. Or rather, following his custom, he disputed. That partly accounts for the respect which was shown to him, especially by his opponents. He gave every auditor his due. As soon as his sermon was ended he would invite those who were not satisfied to come forward; and then 'they stand up that will object and then he answers.' This fervour of disputation possessed him all his days. When they cast him into prison in 1644 for baptizing some adults he set about converting his fellow prisoners. It was a particular joy to find among them Dr. Daniel Featley, the author of that provocative pamphlet, *The Dippers Dipt, or the Anabaptists duck'd and plunged over head and eares at a disputation in Southwark, 1645*. As Denne failed to convince Featley in gaol, he challenged him to a public disputation as soon as they were released. His account of this, *The Foundation of Children's Baptism discovered and rased: an answer to Dr. Featley, 1645*, was for many years a standard authority among the Baptists. Featley, who had been discomfited in the debate, refused to publish his side of it and died soon after.

In the same way, when Denne joined the new Model Army in 1646 (it was the alternative to gaol), he won many a battle for the Baptist cause. Cromwell's Army was one vast congregation of Old Testament zealots (viii), a seething mass of speculative opinions, a very paradise for a preacher. Amongst the soldiers there was a leaning towards the Baptists, for the most popular drill-books in use for the cavalry and infantry were written by men of that persuasion, and the Baptist chaplains knew how to fight as well as pray. When the Hitchin Trained-Bands men were in garrison at Newport Pagnell they had for chaplain a man after Denne's heart, a Captain Paul Hobson, author of *The Fallacy of Infants Baptisme discovered*, 1646. On one occasion he preached to such effect that a riot was caused in the town and martial law

viii. 'Cromwell,' says Cleveland, 'hath beat up his drums clean through the Old Testament—you may know the genealogy of our Saviour by the names of his regiment. The muster master hath no other list than the first chapter of St. Matthew.'

had to be proclaimed (ix). Lest this latter-day Paul should 'exceedingly trouble the city' and cause another uproar, the governor, Sir Samuel Luke, who was a Presbyterian, thought it wiser to plunge him into prison.

V

The aristocratic pen of History has not thought it necessary to study the opinions of the common soldier or the contemptible Baptist; they have been allowed to perish unobserved. But we do know that about this time, and perhaps as a result of Hobson's preaching and Denne's disputations, some leading Hitchin men professed the Baptist faith. That gallant officer Col. Sadleir, Lord of Temple Dinsley and a member of the Hertfordshire Committee of War, was one. In after years, when he became Cromwell's Adjutant-General in Ireland and Governor of Galway, he was complained of by the clergymen there, because he would not allow them to baptize otherwise than by immersion. Another was Sir John Read, Lord of the Manor of Minsden, who was the representative of Hitchin on the grand committee of the Eastern Association. These two notables were Baptists open and professed, but many another might be discovered amongst those Hitchin men who signed the Petition or Remonstrance of February 4, 1648–9 (see Vol. I, page 208), for it has one clause which is copied direct from the General Baptist Confession of that day: 'No civil power in the world can meddle with Religion, but they must intrench upon the Prerogative Royal of Jesus Christ.'

As yet it was a matter of individuals only, wrestling with God by themselves through the dark night of the soul. There is no congregation, no 'gathered church.' One can discern merely 'those weak and scattered brethren' whom the Baptist Circular of 1653 hoped to 'communicate with groundedly according to the rule of Christ.' So long as the Commonwealth lasted the majority of Dissenters saw no reason to separate from their mother church. It had been swept and garnished and the unclean spirits driven out. Moreover, Thomas Kidner, who had been

ix. *A Garden Inclosed and Wisdom justified only of her Children. Being two Exercises delivered at Newport Pagnell, for declaration whereof the Author was then imprisoned and since accused for delivering of Blasphemie.* Paul Hobson. 1647.

appointed Minister here in 1648, was a man after their own heart. He is described upon his stone as ' a burning and a shining light '; and, if he was not all that, he was at least the soul of tolerance. So long as they left him in peace to collect books and save his bibliophile's soul, he cared little what men thought or said or did. Each one must read the Book of Life after his own fashion. Some good Puritans may have been pained to find in his library (376) such questionable tomes as Favours's *Antiquity triumphing over Novelty against the late Upstart Heresies*, and Bastwick's *Utter routing of the Independents and Sectaries*, and Shute's *Plague of Froggs*; but Kidner's convictions were sound enough. When the time came, on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, he also was amongst the ejected who suffered for conscience' sake. In the meantime he respected the conscience of others, and gave every man his due. Joseph Besse, the author of the *Sufferings of the Quakers*, 1. 242, calls him a persecutor, and charges him with prosecuting his parishioners in the Exchequer ' out of mere malice '; but it was only when they denied him *his* dues, i.e. his tithes, that Kidner became unkind. If he were unable to collect tithes, it was evident he could not go on collecting books. It is not until 1658 that Hitchin Baptists began to absent themselves from Kidner's ministrations in any numbers. That was the year of the famous disputation over Infant Baptism between Henry Denne and Peter Gunning which was held at the Church of St. Clement Danes in the Strand and lasted two whole days (507). But it was not so much Denne who persuaded the Hitchin Dissenters to leave their mother church. In the place of that fiery comet of a man who was here to-day and gone to-morrow a new star had arisen, one that was to stand fixed and for ever in the firmament of heaven.

The name and family of John Bunyan were known already to the people of this parish. His aunt, Alice, the daughter of Thomas Bunyan of Elstow, had lived here many years, and had been buried at St. Mary's in 1614. His sister, Elizabeth, had been baptized here in 1638. His wife and child are said to have sheltered here whilst he lay for the first time in Bedford Gaol, 1660–1672. In after years his son John was to leave Bedford and try his fortunes here (x). As for Bunyan himself, there were scores of disbanded soldiers at Hitchin who remembered

x. These facts, which are taken from the registers and records of St. Mary's, are not noticed in Dr. Brown's standard *Life of Bunyan* (500).

the raw, foul-mouthed (xi) recruit with whom they had served in the garrison at Newport Pagnell. Dead as a stone, he had seemed, to all the things of God. Now they learnt with amazement of his turning godly, and of his being chosen by Pastor Gifford's church at Bedford in 1658 to go out into the villages and preach. But when they heard this converted tinker with their own ears their amazement turned to admiration and once again to awe. They had not heard it on this wise before. In the furnace of his zeal and on the ringing anvil of his speech he fashioned their hearts anew.

VI

From this time forward, and even during the twelve years of his first imprisonment, Bunyan was constantly in these parts. Sometimes he would ride direct to Hitchin by way of Shefford Hardwicke, where his staunch friend, James Taylor (xii), lived. More often he would make a circuitous preaching tour by way of Harlington, Bendish, Wain Wood, Meldreth, Gamlingay, and so round again to Bedford. The good people of Hitchin would steal away and meet him either at Bendish, five miles away, or Wain Wood, two miles away, and usually at dead of night (570). Hidden away in the country, these were places well adapted for persecuted, hunted men. The 'Puritan Preaching-Shed,' as it was called, at Bendish had originally been a malt-house, and was so low that no man of any stature could stand upright within it. The building with its thatched roof ran in two directions, the pulpit, which is now removed to the Baptist Chapel at Breachwood Green, being placed at the angle. Adjoining the pulpit, there was a high pew in which the ministers could sit out of the sight of informers. At the back of it there was a door by which

xi. Some of his biographers have scouted his own confession that he 'had but few equals in cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming the holy name of God,' and have suggested that this was a habit merely of his early youth. But he was a grown man, when one who was 'herself a very loose and ungodly wretch,' and therefore not overnice, protested that it made her tremble to hear him, that he was the ungodliest fellow for swearing she heard in all her life, and that it was enough to spoil all the youth in the whole town' (560. 60).

xii. This good man and his wife were buried in the garden at Shefford Hardwicke, where their headstones can be seen to this day. Whenever it was known that Bunyan would come that way, Taylor used to gather all the neighbouring Dissenters into his parlour. The preacher came to Shefford when his ticket-of-leave was for the night only, for he could just manage to ride the eight miles, exhort the brethren, and get back before the break of day.

THE COTTAGE BY BUNYAN'S DELL

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

they could escape should any magistrates or constables appear. Close to Bendish is Mobbs Hole, where Bunyan was brutally handled on one occasion when visiting Thomas Younge, and the tree at Tinker's Hall, beneath whose shade he is said to have turned again on one occasion to his old trade and mended the villagers' pots and pans (xiii) (570).

At Wain Wood, in Hitchin parish, there was no preaching-shed. The cottage is still there with its pleasant ingle-nook, in which Bunyan smoked many a peaceful pipe. But it was in the woodland dell which is still known as Bunyan's Dell, under the trees and under the stars, that he preached to his 'gathered church,' which numbered sometimes over a thousand souls (560. 251). If it drenched with rain, there were four devoted women ever at hand to hold an apron above his bare head as he preached (561). But here, in the neighbourhood of Hitchin town, where their oppressors dwelt, there was need to protect him from something more serious than rain. Scouts were posted upon Tatmore Hills to give warning of the approach of any officers of the law. Sometimes it was thought necessary to disguise the preacher himself in a smock-frock, and make him hold a wagoner's whip (574. 13). The tale still lingers of one such hazardous night when, as Bunyan ran away upon the approach of an informer, a woman called after him in mocking tones, 'Where is your God now?' 'In *Micah* vii, 7–10,' he shouted over his shoulder; an answer quick as lightning, which, it is said, was blest to her conversion (559. 641). 'I will wait,' says Micah in the passage referred to, 'I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgement for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?'

xiii. After many wanderings, Bunyan's anvil came in the year 1905 into the possession of Mr. John Beagarie of Hitchin. It has Bunyan's name cut in large characters upon it and the year 1647 in which he left the Army. For its authenticity see the pamphlet issued by Mr. Beagarie in 1925: *New Documentary Evidence of John Bunyan as a Soldier, with an Account of the finding of his Brazier's Anvil*. In 1927 the anvil was sold by Mr. Beagarie to Sir R. Leicester Harmsworth.

VII

Just above Wain Wood stood Hunsdon House, the home of those six brothers Foster who long befriended Bunyan whilst preaching in these parts. Steadfast and true men, ' distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality,' whose descendants likewise have borne honoured names in the annals of Nonconformity (xiv) (574. 59). A mile to the south, over the fields, stood Kingswalden Bury, the family home of Sir Matthew Hale, the judge with whom Bunyan's wife pleaded so importunately to set her husband free (560. 156). That was in 1661, nine months after Bunyan's arrest at Harlington ' for devilishly and perniciously abstaining from coming to church to hear divine service and for being a common upholder of unlawful meetings and conventicles to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom' (560. 152). It is interesting to note that Francis Wingate, the magistrate who signed the warrant of committal, had for his wife Lettice Peirce, whose father had been Vicar of Hitchin from 1620 to 1636 (560. 140). As Wingate retired to his parlour to draw up the *mittimus* for Bedford Gaol there came in one whom Bunyan describes as ' that old enemy of the truth, Dr. Lindall.' Once again Hitchin is concerned, for Lindall, who had been curate of Hitchin under Peirce, not only took over the living on his vicar's death, but his vicar's widow as well, thus becoming father-in-law to Wingate, who on the next vacancy appointed him to his own parish of Harlington (560. 142).

The scene which followed is well described by Dr. John Brown: ' Lindall,' he says, ' came in to give this tinker-preacher a piece of his own mind. Bunyan with fitting self-respect quietly replied that he was not there to speak with him, but with the Justice. Lindall then angrily asked how he could prove that he had any right to preach? Bunyan replied that he had the right which the Apostle Peter gave when he said, " As every man hath received the gift, even so let him minister the same."

xiv. All through the 250 years of the church's existence the Fosters have been in membership, and, with but few intervals, in the diaconate. The present head of the family, Matthew Henry Foster, was elected to the office of deacon as far back as 1866. Those who can come by the scarce pamphlet of Edward Foster on *The Genealogy and History of the Foster Family* (1856) will do well to read it through; for apart from its biographical value it throws much light upon the history of the Tilehouse Church (555).

A little nonplussed at this, Lindall fell into that abuse which is sometimes the refuge of men foiled in argument, and said tauntingly that he remembered reading of one Alexander, a coppersmith, who did much to oppose and disturb the Apostles—"aiming, 'tis like, at me," says Bunyan, "because I was a tinker." Not to be behindhand, Bunyan replied that he too remembered something from his reading, to the effect that very many priests and pharisees had their hands in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was in the mood, he tells us, for going a little further still, but just at that moment there came into his mind the passage, "answer not a fool according to his folly"; and after that he was, as he says, as sparing of his speech as he could be without prejudice to the truth' (560. 143). And so 'that old enemy of the truth' returned to his comfortable rectory-house, whilst the tinker who 'presumed to mend souls as well as kettles and pans' was cast into Bedford Gaol.

It was round about that question of Lindall's, 'What right have ye to preach?' that the main battle was to rage; for it struck at the very heart of the Puritan position. 'Who is sufficient for these things?' demanded Rotheram, the Orthodox Divine, of Henry Denne. 'Not Coblers and Tradesmen, who to the dishonour of God and the ruine of this Nation, pollute God's Ordinances. . . . How miserably is the word of God mangled by a company of unlettered, unskilfull Laicks, who never had authority either from God or man. . . . When such men stand in God's stead, let them take heed they do not deliver the Devil's message.' 'Is a tinker to be thought more infallible than the pure spouse of Christ?' wrote Thomas Smith, the Cambridge Professor of Arabic, after enduring a sermon from Bunyan in the barn at Toft. 'Let me beseech you for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for the Church's sake, for your reputation's sake, for your children's sake, for your Country's sake, for your immortal soul's sake, consider sadly and seriously what will be the consequences in following such strangers' (xv) (560. 122). Now,

xv. Though Denne was himself a Cambridge man and a friend of Thomas Smith, he maintained Bunyan's call to preach in a vigorous pamphlet entitled *The Quaker no Papist*, 1659. The pamphlet is so styled because Denne was upholding the cause not only of the preaching tinker, but of George Whitehead, the Quaker. 'They are angry with the tinker,' says Denne, 'because he strives to mend souls as well as kettles and pans.' Three years before Denne, however, Bunyan's own pastor, John Burton, had entered the lists. In a commendation of Bunyan's first book, *Some Gospel Truths opened*, he gives his testimony to the preacher's soundness, godly conversation and ability to

whilst they were few in the land, now, said other sound churchmen, was the time to put these Hot-Gospellers to silence, or else harry them out of the land. And indeed that blessed consummation seemed likely to come to pass. So at any rate Sir Edward Chamberlayne was thinking as he sat down to prepare another edition of his popular guide to *The Present State of England*. 'As for those other Persuasions, whose Professors are commonly called Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth-Monarchy Men, Ranters, Adamites, Antinomians, Sabbatarians, Perfectionists, Familists, and the rest of those Mushroomes of Christianity; as most of them sprang up suddenly in the late unhappy night of Confusion, so it is to be presumed that they may in a short time vanish in this blessed day of Order; and therefore not worthy to be described here as Religions professed in England.'

For a time the Conformists had it their own way. To the 'weak and scattered brethren' round Hitchin, Bunyan's arrest was a desolating blow. They were as sheep without a shepherd. There was no one to take the place of the pastor they had lost. Even if there had been, it would have been of no avail; for the King who had once promised 'that no man should be called in question in matters of religion' had now, 1664, given his assent to the Conventicle Act. If more than four of them met together for worship, they could each one be fined £5 or sent to prison for three months. A third offence might mean a fine of £100 or transportation for seven years. This was in no small measure the result of a rising planned by Paul Hobson, their old Baptist chaplain, for August 19 the year before. They themselves had refused to have anything to do with it. They could not see the good of these violent counsels, for it was Venner's mad outbreak in 1661 that had first set the Government against them. But thousands of the Trained Bands were said to have been won over by Hobson, and numbers in the Life Guards and the Duke of Albemarle's regiment. The designs of the conspirators were highly attractive. The King was not to be put to death. But he was to be forced to fulfil the Declaration of Breda, and grant liberty of conscience to all but Papists. The Excise, the Chimney-tax and all other taxes whatsoever were to be abolished, and a gospel magistracy and

preach: 'This man is not chosen out of an earthly, but out of the heavenly university,' and has already taken 'heavenly degrees.'

ministry set up. Alas! this Protestant Utopia was not to be realized. No one ever knew who blundered or who gave the plan away, though it was darkly hinted that Hobson himself, *alias* Dr. Smith, *alias* Dr. Love, had been playing double. But the leaders of the conspiracy were hunted down, and Hobson himself was committed to the Tower (xvi) (510).

VIII

Now, the brethren at Hitchin were going to pay the penalty, too. The testing time had come. Bunyan had said it would: 'He suffereth us to hunger and to wander in a bewildered condition that we may taste and relish the words of God, and live not by bread alone' (560. 211). It was for them to show that they could keep their souls alive on this bread of affliction, and prove that hard saying which Paul Hobson had uttered in happier days: 'This life [i.e. the religious life] is a hidden thing; and you that enjoy it know it and none else. When men have imprisoned you and think they have overcome you, then are you most at liberty. When they have brought you to poverty, then have they most enriched you; when ye die, ye live' (504).

Under 'great threatenings,' with informers like beasts of prey prowling round about them, they were driven to meet in little companies of three and four, read the Scriptures with one another, and pray for better times. 'All is gone,' said Bunyan, 'but the soul.' In spite of all their precautions, however, on one pretext or another their leaders were taken from them: John Hurst for being absent from his parish church 'fower Lordes daies past': Joseph Baker 'for suffering unlawfull meetings in his house on the Lord's day': William Bayley, 'taken at an unlawfull assembly and refusing to tell his name' (xvii): Robert Heelball, 'for performing acts of religious adoration otherwise than according to the laws of this kingdom of England': and

xvi. The State Papers are full of his examinations, disclosures and petitions. When the Privy Council had sucked him dry they cast what was left of him into Chepstow Castle. After thirteen months' solitary confinement his spirit was broken. He pleads to go to Jamaica, or any distant place. He cannot face his friends again. He is 'for peace and quiet subjection to present authority' (510).

xvii. The Quakers were more adroit. When Mary Fisher was apprehended in 1653 and the officer demanded her name, she replied: 'It is written in the Book of Life.' And when he demanded her husband's name she answered: 'I have no husband but Jesus Christ.'

numbers 'for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance' (72. 176, 183). As a counsel of despair their old leader, Henry Denne, once so indomitable, was now suggesting they should make at least a semblance of conformity, and swear what oaths were required of them with their tongues in their cheeks: *vide* his *Epistle recommended to all the prisons in this city and nation to such as chuse Restraint than the violation of their conscience*' (508). But they preferred to remember his former words to them: 'If ye are to feare anyone let it be God Almightie, and not his Majestie, who compared with Him is but as a drop of rain.'

One mercy was vouchsafed to them. It was not long before they had preachers with them again, and were able to meet together, though still clandestinely, as a gathered church. About this time, says Calamy (538. 1. 259–262), Francis Holcroft, formerly Fellow of Clare Hall and the ejected minister of Bassingbourne, being 'touched with compassion for the souls of the neglected country-people,' began to visit them secretly in their several villages. He had a famous chestnut nag which carried him from place to place over three counties, and often galloped him out of the hands of those who sought to take him. 'He was indefatigable in his labours,' continues Calamy, 'preaching perpetually about the country; so that there is scarcely a village in Cambridgeshire but some old person can show you the barn where Holcroft preached.' As for his preaching, said Milway in preaching his funeral sermon, 'it appeared to me truly apostolical, primitive and divine' (538. 1. 261). A certain Mary Churchman, the daughter of a High Constable and a strong Churchwoman, as her name suggests, went once out of curiosity to hear him. In her *Memoirs*, which were edited by Samuel James, a pastor in later years of the Hitchin Baptist Chapel, she speaks of going 'to hear that great man of God, Mr. Holcroft. He preached powerfully of Hell and judgement,' she says, 'which made me tremble and secretly wish I had never come there. Every time he named the name of Christ, it was terrible as the thunder and lightning upon Mount Sinai. I wished myself covered with the mountains and looked upon Christ as my terrible judge and enemy' (546. 94). Her mother reproved her for going to a Dissenting Conventicle, and added 'they bewitch people into their persuasions.' The next time Mary Churchman attended, Holcroft preached in a different vein from these words: 'My

beloved is mine and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies.' To Mary Churchman this was as balm in Gilead: 'He was a good Samaritan to me that day' (546, 95). Eventually her father turned her out of doors for going to these meetings, 'not suffering me to carry anything with me except the clothes on my back. But, a fortnight after, my mother sent me a box of wearing apparel which I received with these words in my thoughts: *Matt.* vi. 32. "For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"' (546. 94–8).

In another passage of her *Memoirs* she gives a lively picture of one of Holcroft's numerous escapes. Worn out with preaching, he was lying asleep in the parlour of a farmhouse, where she was in service, when two magistrates who were in search of him arrived. Leaving them to beat on the front door, she hurriedly roused the sleeper, and got him out of a window and over the garden hedge. The magistrates 'found some of the slips of his clothes in the hedges, which made them roar like bloodhounds; after which they came and seized a whole house of goods.'

Calamy in his account speaks of Holcroft as having 'a lion-like courage, tempered with the most winning affability in his whole deportment' (538. 1. 262). And this in spite of trials which would have broken any ordinary man. His meetings were constantly disturbed by Cambridge undergraduates, whose evil habit it was to follow him about and beat drums furiously as soon as he began to preach. His estate, which at one time was considerable, for he was the son of a knight, dwindled away in paying fines and in helping other sufferers for truth's sake in their need. His books he contrived to keep only by hiding them in the houses of his friends. They were worth as much as £40 on his death. For most of the period from 1664 to 1672 he was imprisoned in Cambridge Castle. The original sentence upon him was to abjure the realm or suffer death as a felon. But the Earl of Anglesey represented the injustice of his case to Charles II and obtained a reprieve. It was due to another college friend, John Tillotson, who became Chaplain to the King in 1670 and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, that Holcroft enjoyed more liberty in gaol and more frequent leave to go out preaching than was usual. Unhappily the Toleration Act of 1689 came too late for Holcroft. Like his old chestnut nag, he was worn out with hard quarters and hard work. Taking cold whilst preaching to a great crowd in the stifling prison at the

Fleet, he sank into a melancholy and so declined. But as he lay dying in 1692 the cloud of 'deep dejection' was removed. He had, says Milway, 'a prelibation of glory in his spirit. The sun of righteousness did arise before he gave up the ghost, that gave him an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom.' He departed with great joy uttering these words: 'For I know that if my earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (514. 540. 554. 559. 564. 571).

IX

Sometimes, when Holcroft had not freedom to visit his people, he would write a circular letter for them; one of these was printed in 1668 entitled *A Word to the Saints from the Watch Tower* (xviii). In the preface to this *Word* he describes himself as 'a faithful embassadour in bonds for the gospel.' 'I myself,' he adds, 'especially on Lords Days have been at libertie in my soul, being present in spirit with you in your Solemn Assemblies. . . . Now let us mind what is before us; and whatever our hand finds to do in this little space of reviving from bondage let us do it with all our might; for I am prone to think the night comes again wherein little work will be done.'

So, from his prison, he preached to his own people. But more often one of those elders who assisted him in the church that he had formed would go out preaching in his stead. There is an alphabetically arranged Spy-Book amongst the State Papers which shows that as early as 1663 'Mr. Houldcraft with Mr. Audy and Mr. Lock meetes many hundreds at Hitchin and Pauls Walden and att Shefford—att all these places dwells many that are joyned to Houldcraft.' In another place the Spy reports that 'Audy, an assistant to Houle Croft, rides by turne into Hertfordshire to gather concourse of people, of the middle and meaner sort, most women and mayds, to their meetings' (509).

Of these preaching elders, Joseph Oddy (for that is the true spelling of his name) was a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and until his ejectment in 1662 had held the living of Meldreth, close to that of Holcroft, in Cambridgeshire. After preaching

xviii. The preface is dated from Cambridge Castle, December 27, 1667. The only copy I have met with is in the Bodleian (*Pamphlets* 25, 22).

unmolested all over the Fens for five years, he threw in his lot with Holcroft, and helped him to found and superintend many dissenting churches in Cambs and Herts and Beds. 'He was so much followed,' says Calamy, 'persons travelling twenty miles to hear him, that he was sometimes constrained to preach in the open fields; on which account it is to be less wondered at that he was frequently imprisoned' (538. I. 275–6). On one occasion, when 'sitting upon his horse that he might more readily escape, he was broken in upon so abruptly that he was thrown and quite stunned with the fall. In this state of insensibility he was laid by his inhuman persecutors across his horse, and in that situation carried to Cambridge Castle.' Five years' imprisonment he endured at that time, but 'at length was connived at to preach privately to his friends.' His biographer quotes an impromptu of his on being insulted as he came out of prison by one of the Cambridge wits:—

'Good day, Mr. Oddy,
Pray how fares your body,
Methinks you look *damnably* thin.'

Oddy's reply.

'That, Sir,'s your mistake,
'Tis for righteousness' sake;
Damnation's the fruit of *your* sin.'

Oddy predeceased his revered friend by five years; but in death they were not divided. They lie side by side in a piece of ground which Holcroft bought as a burial-ground at Oakington, and their virtues are recorded on one tomb.

Of Thomas Lock, Calamy can say no more than that he was a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, 'a very sober and pious young man' (538. I. 280). But, besides Oddy and Lock, there were three other elders of Holcroft's church who ministered at Hitchin. 'A man of untainted piety and integrity,' Samuel Corbyn, Master of Arts of Trinity College, Cambridge, devoted himself not only as a preacher but as a writer to the cause. He published amongst other works *A Call from the living God to unconverted Sinners*, *Advice to Sinners under Convictions to prevent their miscarrying in Conversion* and *Devout Breathings of a Pious Soul in a hundred Patheticall Meditations* (538. I. 276). In addition to him, there was Thomas Beard, who in the Civil War had commanded a company of foot in the Earl of Essex's

army; and Joseph Waite, a divine deeply read in Latin and Hebrew and Greek, but a holder, it seems, of certain 'peculiar and rigid opinions.' He contended that the Sabbath ought to begin on Saturday evening, that smoking was a grievous national sin, and that the wearing of periwigs, especially by ministers, was an abomination (538. 3. 288).

X

In the year 1668 Beard and Waite were excluded from Holcroft's church for some reason not disclosed. They then proposed to offer themselves as pastors to the Hitchin people, who, having some scruples in the matter, wrote for advice to John Owen, formerly Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, and still a man of authority in the Puritan world. His reply, dated 'the 18th of third month 1669,' is the earliest document entered in the Church Book of the Hitchin Baptists (xix), and makes it clear for one thing that the 'weak and scattered brethren' in this parish had for some little time past been gathered into a church. Writing 'in the name and by the Apintment of severall elders of churches walking in and about London,' Owen says, 'Breathren Beloved in the Lord, grace and peace bee unto you from God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Wee give thankes unto God for you all, understanding that the woord of the Kingdom is cum unto you, not in woord onely, but in power and in the Holey goste, and that ye are becom followers of the Lord in this day of affliction and of the patience of Jesus Christe, and we trust your faith shall grow and the love of every one of you towards each other shall abound yet more and more.' Owen then goes on to speak of 'the scandall that hath com upon the way of the Gospell by the precipitant and undue casting out of persons out of the visible kingdom of our Lord,' and asserts that Holcroft and his church had 'no sufficient ground for their proceeding' against Waite and Beard. 'That letter of ours they have in their hands does plainly show what our sentiments are. . . . Our advice was that they would again receive them into fellowship; nor do wee therefor know aney rule of the

xix. Any quotation made throughout the rest of this chapter, which has no source assigned to it, may be taken as coming from this same church book. Those students who consult the original should be warned in advance of its confused pagination. After the first fifty-two pages the book starts afresh at the other end. The sequence of events is very hard to follow.

Gospill that will be infringed by your continuin to Honour Mr. Waites for his workes sake, or by your encouragin of him in his Labour in the Lord. Wee rejoyce in that Blessed Success that the Lord hath crownd his ministry withall amongst you (som of you being it seems the seale thereof), and wee heartily therefore pray that Hee may yet be more and more of use unto you, for your building up ' (513. 10).

There was a further matter on which the Hitchin Church had besought Owen's advice; for they were much exercised at that time as to whether they ought to be excluding some of their own members for errors in doctrine. From the beginning the brethren here had held by the teaching of Denne, Hobson and Bunyan on the baptism of believers only, denying the validity of infant baptism. But Holcroft and his preaching-elders, who, for lack of any ministers of a Baptist persuasion, had stood by them in this time of persecution, were Pedobaptist or Congregational in their views (574. 15). Not unnaturally some of the Hitchin members were persuaded that the way of their new pastors was the better way, and the unity of the members was endangered. It shows the statesmanship of Owen that, though himself a Congregationalist, he would not countenance any rift in this newly constituted Church. The times were too evil for them to be contending with one another, even on points of doctrine. It was for Nonconformity as a whole to conserve its strength: ' As touching those five of your own number that dissent and separate themselves from your Body, our present Advise is that you would bee much in prayer for them, Carry it all in love, with tenderness towards them, and patiently waite if peradventur God will give them Repentance to the Acknoledgin of the trueth . . . considering your selves least yee also bee tempted and remembringe that yee must beare the burdens one of another that so yee may fulfill the law of Christe. Finally Breathren, bee Perfect, bee of good comfort, bee of one mind, and live in peace, and the God of Love and Peace bee with yee All according to the prayer of your Brethren and Companions in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christe ' (513. 10).

XI

Three years later, 1672, when the *Declaration of Indulgence* gave a temporary respite from the pains and penalties of the

second Conventicle Act of 1670, Dr. Owen and Captain Cresset (xx) applied on behalf of the members to license the house of Sarah Adams at Hitchin and that of Widow Heath at Preston as places of worship. Both James Rogers and Thomas Milway, who were to minister there, are described as 'Congregational Teachers' (559. 645). But in the following year the Hitchin Church thought the time had come to have a pastor of their own persuasion. Accordingly, on May 25, 1673, they approached the church at Bedford, and asked if they would give up their brother Nehemiah Coxe, 'in order to the exercise of the office of an Elder or Pastor' with them, which the Bedford members 'concluded to take into consideration' (560. 248). At the end of twelve months they were still considering; not without cause, as it appears. Coxe seems to have sprung from a family of some repute (514). Two generations earlier one of them had been Bishop of Ely. His father, at one time a Devonshire parson, had confessed himself a Baptist on the outbreak of the Civil War, and, after justifying his conversion in print and in public disputes, had become a minister of much resort, first in Bedford and then in London. Nehemiah, his son, was brought up obscurely in a Bedfordshire village, and for a time earned his living as a shoemaker at Cranfield. He was destined, however, to a higher walk in life. His piety was such that the church at Bedford hastened to confer the title of Minister upon him. And such was his gift of tongues that, when prosecuted under the Conventicle Act, he was able to reply in Greek to his Latin indictment; and, when he saw that the Judge was enjoying the discomfiture of the officials, he gave them a taste of Hebrew too. But this gift of tongues or tongue was his undoing. The plain-dealing brethren at Bedford complained of it and he complained of them. The end came on June 7, 1674, when this entry appears in the Bedford Church Book: 'Our brother Nehemiah Cox did publicly make an acknowledgement of several miscarridges by him committed

xx. This remarkable man first came into notice as a leading spirit amongst those seven Baptist churches which combined in 1644 to issue a General Confession of Faith. Subsequently he was appointed to the Central Board of Triers for the Ministry. His gifts of administration were so widely recognized that, notwithstanding his religious views, he was made first Registrar and then Master of Charterhouse. These offices he held for ten years, and at the same time was assisting the Government to manage the Mint, to investigate inventions, to prosecute fraudulent debtors, etc., till the Restoration put a stop to his multifarious activities.—*Vide* Whitley's *History of British Baptists* (1923), pp. 70, 71, 83.

in uttering several words and performing certain practises that might justly be construed to have a tendencie to make rifts and devisions in the Congregation' (xxi) (560. 248). Having been informed beforehand of their intended pastor's fall from grace, the Hitchin Baptists at this same meeting 'intreated that the church would consent to give up our brother Wilson to be chosen to office by them' (560. 249). Over him also, it seems, there had been trouble in previous years, but that was almost forgotten. In 1669, at a time when 'thy lot is cast in a place of high transgression,' a letter of advice and admonition had been sent to him by the church under the hand of John Bunyan, Samuel Fenn and four other elders: 'Our hope of thee is steadfast through grace; trusting in the Lord that he that hath begun a good work in thee will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is a strange sight to behold those that did feed delicately to be desolate in the street; and they that were brought up in scarlet to embrace dunghills. We speak not these things to shame thee, but as our beloved brother we warn thee. Keep that which is committed to thy charge; watch and be sober. And, if thou be inclined to sleep, let that of Delilah rouse thee; the Philistines be upon thee Samson. Grace be with thee. The Lord is at hand. Behold the judge stands at the door. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus. Written by appointment and subscribed in the name and with the consent of the Congregation' (560. 212).

If Wilson as a young man indulged himself in sumptuous living, he may well be forgiven; his after-life was going to be one long penance of privation. The church at Bedford, at any rate, had no misgiving about his fitness for the ministry. Here is the letter of his dismission, which Bunyan, Fenn, and others write for him in '1 month 1677': 'The Church of Christ in and about Bedford to the Church in and about Hitchin sendeth greeting:—

'Holy and Beloved. We the fellow-heirs with you of the grace of life, having taken your earnest desires concerning our giving

xxi. The career of this extraordinary man would be worth following and finding out. W. T. Whitley, in the work above cited, gives some particulars: 'After such an experience he naturally preferred to come to London, where, with the help of a periwig and a gold-topped cane, he got together a capital practice as a doctor. Perhaps few of his patients knew that he was also an acceptable Baptist minister, soon to be called to the joint-pastorate of the most important London church—that of Petty France,' in what was known later as York Street. See also Sloane MSS., 656, f. 1, and *Trans. of the Baptist Historical Society*, vol. vi, pp. 58–59.

up to you our beloved brother John Wilson into serious consideration, with much praire to God for direction in so waitie a matter, have at last (God haveing bowed the heart of the Church to consent to what you have both longed and, as we trust, much prayed for) Granted and by these lines do grant and give up our beloved brother to fellowship with you for youer mutuall edification and joy of faith. We need not as some others to commend him to you, God having before prevented that by commending him to you Himself. Now, God and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ that great shepherd of the sheep, make this both our and youer well-beloved brother a double blessing to you both in his ministry and membership with you, and also a watchman over you, if God and the Church with you shall call him ther to. Amen' (513. 11).

XII

After three months' trial, on the first of the fourth month 1677, 'Brother Wilson gave in his Answer unto the Calle that the Church before had given him to the office of a pastor to serve the Church in that Relation as God should Helpe him, which he excepted before the congregation' (513. 13). There were two other important matters concluded in the church-meeting assembled together at Brother John Foster's that same day. Ralph Bigg was given 'a Solom call to the ofice of a Deacon'; and those five who were still possessed with scruples about adult baptism were given their dismissal to Holcroft's Pedobaptist Church at Cambridge: 'The Church of Christ in and about Hitchin unto the Church of Christ in and about Cambridge sendeth greeting. Beloved in the Lord, the Church of Christ heare, though conscious to herselfe that she walketh after the faith and charitee comanded in the gospel, yet doe grant and conclude for love sake that our brothers George Wilkinson, Richard Sheppard, Joseph Cooper, and our sisters Jackson and Flindall, who desiring to be dismissed unto you, upon som scruples of conscience with reference unto some things amongst us (which yet we account good and godly), we therefor do dismiss them unto you for their better edification, desireing they may be a blessing unto you' (513. 12).

Four weeks later, 'Brother Wilson was sett aparte to the ofice of a paster, there being present Bros. Anthony Ramer, John James, and Thomas Kelsey of London and Samuel Fenn of

Bedford ' (513. 13). Bunyan himself was not able to be present for the good reason that he had set out for London, taking with him the manuscript of *Pilgrim's Progress* for publication. At the outset of his ministry Wilson, who was always a man of peace, made an earnest attempt at a working arrangement if not a union with Holcroft's church at Cambridge: ' Grace be with you,' he begins his letter of advances, ' we have as some of you know often signified our desire of reconciliation with you, and the Brethren do by these lines signifie to you the same againe, for it is not according to our principles (which are the principles of peace) to do anything that should have a tendency to maintain differences among brethren. Wherefore if you be willing to give us a meeting that if possible we may come together in order to peace, we whose hands are hereunder subscribed do signifie that we shall heartily embrace it, and to that end do propound to meet you either at Henry Warner's, John Sympson's or Dr. Hutchinson's ' (513. 14). To this overture there was no response.

If they could not be at one with the church at Cambridge, they were at least resolved to be united in themselves. On October 25, 1681, meeting together at Brother Thomas Field's house, and ' so fully that very few was absent,' they ' renewed their covenant to the Lord and one to another with fasting and prayer.' And this is the covenant to which, ' none-contradicting but by silent lifting up our hands, we had the Amen or universall consent of all ': ' We who, through the Marcy of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, have obtained grace to give ourselves to the Lord and one to another by the will of God, to have communion as Saints in our gospel fellowship, Doe before God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holly Angels agree and promese all of us (the Lord assisting) to walke together as a church of Jesus Christ in love to the Lord and one another, and indevor to yeld sinceare and harty obedienc to the laws, ordinances, and appointments of our Lord and Law-Giver in his church ' (513. 16).

The effect of this covenant is soon observed in the discipline enforced upon those brothers and sisters who proved a stumbling-block to the ' walking-together ' of the members or brought discredit on the church. The first case entered in the Church-book is that of Thomas Field, at whose house the covenant had been taken. He has to answer ' for receveing into his Flocke another

distress was levied on the goods and chattels of the brother or sister concerned. These were carried off to a disused brew-house in Dead Street and there stored until there was sufficient to justify an auction sale. On one occasion, whilst Wilson was in prison, some evil-disposed person broke into his house at Bull-Corner and dragged his furniture into the market-place, where they proposed to make a burnt-offering of it in the presence of the people. But this was more than even Draper dare allow (574. 19).

The Church seems to have come through all this baptism of fire untouched. The God of Love and Peace had been with them. The covenant had been kept. Those few weak brethren who conformed under the stress of persecution had been cast out. Their names are not to be found in this Church-book but in the book of the Established Church and in the rolls of the Quarter Sessions; e.g. 1683: 'Certificate by William Gibbs, vicar of Hitchin, and his churchwardens that Robert Shipsea of Hitchin hath for several Lord's Dayes last past repaired to the parish church to heare divine service and sermon and there hath continued publicly in the face of the congregation then and there assemblled soberly and orderly all the time according to the laws in that behalf made and provided' (512. 6).

At last came the blessed year of their deliverance. A King who was a Protestant indeed ascended the throne of England; and with the Toleration Act of 1689 the bitter struggle in which Dissenters had asserted their right to exist and their liberty to worship according to their conscience was ended. The prisons were opened. The preachers came into their own pulpits again. Nonconformity was 'established.' Up to this time the Church had met in one or another of the brethren's houses, whichever was least suspected, or in a woolstapler's barn (xxiv) in Bancroft which was lent to them by Sarah Adams (574. 20). Now it was possible to have a settled meeting-place, and the members went about this with such a will that by 1692 it was not only built but paid for. The building, of which an illustration is prefixed to this

xxiv. This barn stood at the rear of what is now No. 20 Bancroft and the police station. In the wall of the garden of the house can still be seen the stumps of some of its supporting timbers. Francis Lucas, who once proposed to write a history of Hitchin, used to say that the Adam-and-Eve beerhouse, a little farther down Bancroft, was named after and in mockery of this barn of Sarah Adams (53).

BULL CORNER, 1885: SHOWING JOHN WILSON'S HOUSE ON THE EXTREME LEFT; NEXT TO IT THE OLD HALF MOON, AND IN THE CENTRE SCOTT HOUSE, FORMERLY ISAAC BROWN'S ACADEMY

chapter, stood in Dovehouse Close (xxv), farther back than the present chapel in Tilehouse Street, and had its unassuming entry in the unfrequented lane of Wratten. Of the £207 which it cost £89 was subscribed in London: Thomas Hollis giving £15 to buy the ground; John Strudwick, in whose house at Snow Hill Bunyan had died four years previously, giving £5; and Thomas Locke, who had preached here so often, £10. The rest was made up, as the Church-book says, 'in the country'—that is to say, amongst the members, who gave not only money but labour and materials too. Amongst the names of the country people one sees that of Agnes Beaumont, who had been so cruelly slandered in 1674 for riding pillion-wise behind Bunyan to Gamlingay meeting, and Robert Shipsea, who wished to creep back into the fold now that the persecution was over. As a necessary part of the chapel 'a baptizing-place' was provided (xxvi), and for the sake of privacy and protection the whole building was enclosed with a high brick wall (513. 1–3).

XIV

To have this 'local habitation and a name' [Salem Chapel] was a great blessing to the Church. The congregation grew apace, insomuch that before twenty years were past the chapel had to be enlarged.

In a political survey of the Hitchin district, compiled in 1704, Defoe remarked 'it is Whiggish and full of Dissenters' (518). But though their numbers had increased, they were still of the 'mean and middling sort,' and poor as a Nonconformist mouse. In an earlier survey of 1691 it had been noted that 'att Hitchin the Congregation were not able to raise above £10 per annum' for the pastor. One amongst them there was of good family and fortune, and he, like St. Luke, was a physician. The rest belonged to the undistinguished company of husbandmen, hemp-dressers, cordwainers, weavers, warreners, plough-wrights, shep-

xxv. This field name was constantly alluded to in sermons. Wilson, preaching one Sunday from Matthew 10. 16: 'Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves,' told them never to forget they were sitting in Dovehouse Close (952. 3). It has long since been forgotten by the Church. It is, perhaps, as well. The translators of to-day require us to read not 'harmless,' but 'simple.'

xxvi. In 1725 Thomas Hollis presented four baptizing garments—one for the minister, one for a man, and two for women.

herds, gardeners, and the like—the common sort of people whom our blessed Saviour chose as His apostles. It could hardly be expected at that time of day—perhaps never—that Baptists would attract any persons of social standing to their modest chapel, ' that receptacle of new notions ' as it was unkindly called. So far as the Anglicans were concerned, Sacheverell had said the last word of these schismatics: ' They are miscreants, begotten in rebellion, born in sedition, and nursed in faction.'

Nevertheless, in spite of poverty and prejudice, the Church continued to grow. At Bendish, Pirton and Preston other meeting-places were set up, looking to Hitchin as their head. More care was given to the organization of Church life. Not only the Pastor, but the ruling Elders and the Deacons, were constantly going about amongst the brethren lest any breath of scandal or false doctrine should find its way into the fold. If any brother or any sister left the town, he or she was safeguarded with letters of dismission to another church, and followed not only with prayer but with periodical inquiry: ' 1703. Admonition sent by the church to John Warner of Epping to rebuke him for his vain conversation and neglect of the worship of God ' (513. 19). ' 1707. Letter of recommendation to Sister Sarah Field to sit down with the church of Christ walking with Mr. Bragg and Mr. Collens during her stay in the Citty ' (513. 23). This vigilance of pastoral oversight makes all the stranger the apparent neglect of Bunyan's eldest son John, a professed member since 1693 of the Bedford church, who in 1701 left his father's house in St. Cuthbert's parish in that town to make a living at Hitchin. It is clear that he needed help and perhaps a restraining hand. The records of St. Mary's Church show that he was ' likely to become chargable to the poor of our parish.' Furthermore, in that same year he was presented ' for drawing beer or ale without a lysence,' and two years later, on another offence, was committed to Hertford Gaol. By some means, however, he made his way back to Bedford in 1705, where his old friends set him up again in his father's business as a brazier, and persuaded the Corporation to lease him a cottage for twelve shillings a year (517).

From 1697 onwards the members were much exercised about the health of their beloved pastor. Those seven years in Hertford Gaol had left their mark on him, and a paralytic seizure deprived him of what little strength was left. But his spirit was indomit-

able. For several years he had himself carried to meeting and preached to his flock sitting in a chair which Bunyan had given to him, and which is still a treasured heirloom of the Church. Fortunately there were two members of the Church able to assist Wilson in his time of need. Of the 'sober and godly conversation and walking' of Henry Sheppard, the Church-book has much to say, but in brief 'it is such as hath becom the gospell of Christ. . . . From the consideration of the gifts and graces of the holly Gost bestoed upon him and his dilligent studdy of Divine things, whereby he hath attained to some competent understanding in the mysteries of the Gospell, we do judge him meet to be imployed in the work of the Ministry publickly' (513. 18).

Wilson's other assistant was John Hutchinson, to whose skill and fame as a doctor reference has already been made (Vol. I, p. 263). Though 'congregational in judgement,' he had joined himself to the Hitchin Baptists, and spent his talents in their service. According to Calamy, 'he had good skill in music, was an excellent Grecian, spoke French very fluently, and was declared no contemptible poet. He was of a humble, meek and peacable temper; a great enemy to rash anger, and very patient and submissive under trouble' (538. 1. 277).

XV

In 1705, when Hutchinson left Hitchin and Sheppard received a call to be pastor of the Bridgewater Baptists, the Church, on Thomas Hollis's advice, sent an invitation to John Needham, then a young student at the Attercliffe Academy, to be Wilson's 'constant assistant.' 'We entreat you to accept of our Invitation who shall be ready to doe what we can according to our small abillity to make your life comfortable' (513. 20). Wilson wrote separately to Hollis: 'Our monthly meeting is next Thursday, and we have agreed to spend the time in prayer for the young man that, as he hath good naturall and acquired parts, so he may have a rich Anointing of the Spirit of Christ; and tho' he may com to us under som Disadvantages, having one goe before him that hath most of his time preached without the use of any notes in the pulpit and of a loud voice, yet I hope he will not be discouraged and that we shall find him a savoury preacher' (519). There would seem a touch of misgiving as

well as condescension in the old pastor's letter, but the young student arrived with such a comprehensive testimonial from his principal that all doubts were put to rest: 'These are to certify that this our brother gave good satisfaction to us of the Grace of Christ in him upon his admission into Church fellowship, and ever since walked becoming the gospell in sobriety, modesty, graveity, dilligence and sweetness of temper with soundness in the faith and orderliness of behaviour. We therefore affectionately recomend him to your tender notice and respect and you to the grace of Christ as your brethren in the Lord' (513. 21). After a 'twelvemonth tryall of his gift,' the members return thanks to God and to Thomas Hollis 'for this so well and mercifully providing for us. We pray that we may not sin away so great a mercy' (513. 22).

In 1709, 'on account both of our present pastor's naturall decays and the desire we have to see ourselves in more settled circomstances,' Needham was given a call to the joint-pastorate; on certain terms, however. 'For the eas and satisfaction of them members that differ from the rest in point of Baptism, Mr. Needham shall freely and willingly make a chang with any pastor of another church whome they shall desire that shall come peacably to baptize their childeren, so that their consciences may be as fully satisfied in the practis of there judgment as if they had a pastor of there own mind; because what ever pastor doth the work is but a circumstance and not Essential to the Thing itself' (513. 24).

Having set his earthly tabernacle in order, Wilson had the 'eas and satisfaction' of performing one last work of piety with his pen, which was the only thing he was now able to wield. Some years before, in 1692, in collaboration with the pastor of the Bedford Church, Ebenezer Chandler, Wilson had collected into a folio volume, and edited and prefaced with an epistle to the reader, the works of his lifelong friend, John Bunyan. A labour of love, but a labour indeed, for, of the twenty works included, ten were printed for the first time and from manuscripts that would have made any ordinary editor despair (xxvii).

Now, Wilson wished to write his last will and testament as a preacher and bequeath to hair-splitting theologians and inflexible divines that spirit of unity in Christ which had been

xxvii. In 1736 Wilson's grandson, Samuel Wilson, completed another folio edition, containing twenty-seven additional works, which the rights of publishers had prevented the 1692 editors from using.

the text and application of his life. Unless they could pass beyond the negative state of toleration to the active state of love, what hope for religion could there be? On one thing he was resolved, his last word should be not of the Dissidence of Dissent, but the comprehension of all in Christ. As for himself, he stood with Bunyan in this matter, and what he had written of him in 1692 was the faithful record of himself: 'He was a true lover of all that love our Lord Jesus, and did often bewail the different and distinguishing appellations that are among the godly, saying he did believe a time would come when they should all be buried.' To hasten that blessed consummation was the only aim and intent of Wilson's valediction: *An Essay wherein National love and unity is recommended, its opposites Exposed, Arguments for it Propounded, and all Contenders blamed: to which is Subjoyned by the author a poem containing a lamentation for Church Divisions.* At a time when Conformists and Nonconformists were at one another's throats, only relaxing their grip to deal a side blow at the Papists, this essay is an astonishing performance. It should be read in full. Of the poem, a few lines may be given here from Wilson's scathing catalogue of Church divisions and his exposure of those who were rending the seamless robe of Christ:—

'We Read, and Hear, and Preach the Laws of Love,
Yet all doth wind and airie vapours prove.
Christ's Legacie we seem for to embrace,
But still continue far from thoughts of Peace.
What's plain, love one another, we neglect;
What's dark and controverted we respect.
Our Faith is Faction, Zeal is Christened strife,
Religion's all in Talk, but none in life.
Our Pray'rs 'gainst one another fervent are;
For building up our Breaches cold and bare.
Like to our Climate frozen is our Love;
Our Furie like the Torride Zone doth prove.
Our verie praise of Jarring notes is made.
What one doth Preach by others is Gain-said.
One hotlie doth for paritie contend;
While others highlie Prelacie commend.
One doth Festivals in the Church applaud:
Which some call relicts of the *Roman* bawd.
Some are for Pray'rs *ex tempore*, anon
Others embrace what holy Church doth con.
Some when they Pray, the *Pater noster* use;
Others the same industriously refuse.

Some with the public chore would all baptize;
Others in private would it solemnize.
Some kneel when they partake, which others call
A posture that's Idololatricall.
Some would Lay-Elders in the church have place;
Others decry them as an upstart Race.
Some Ceremonies fit and decent Call;
Others, a Practice that's Papisticall.
Some glorifie with mouth the Three in one;
Others that Hymne most zealously doe shun.
Some make the Royal Pow'r a sacred thing;
Others do them before Tribunals bring.

. . . . . .

Thus, thus we toile, and struggle, strive and fight,
While Truth and Peace evanish out of sight.
Our Foes that on the seven hills reside,
With those who down in darkest cells abide,
Pagod-adorers, and the Musulmen,
And stubborn Jews with mirth their sides distend,
Erect their Trophies, and Victorious say,
Aha! so would we have it in our day;
One Lord, one Faith, one Hope, one Heaven we have;
One sacred Blood to purifie and save;
But where's one Heart and Soul us to cement?
One Spirit once that like a Dove was sent?'

It was in 1716 that they carried Wilson for the last time to his chapel. In his extreme weakness did he perhaps recollect what Bunyan had written to him nearly fifty years before?—' God help thee brother to remember the days of thy youth; the first days of David were best. There are but few can say as Caleb: " As my strength was forty years since, so is it now, both to go out and come in before the people of God " ' (560. 212). For more than forty years now he had gone out and come in before these people of God. He loved them almost as a father. But what with ' naturall decays ' and unnatural divisions the last years had been labour and sorrow. He longed to be dissolved and be with Christ. When that had come to pass, they buried him, as was meet and right, beside his pulpit, where, being dead—his loud voice silent in the grave—he yet preacheth.

XVI

Of John Needham, who succeeded Wilson, and who ministered to the Church over thirty-seven years, there is not much

to tell. He kept the faith, but he did not keep the Church-book. The official history of that period is accordingly a blank. When he came to assist Wilson in 1705, he was met by Edward Foster in the vestry and asked his name. 'Needham,' he replied. Whereupon Foster, in his hearty way, clapped him on the back and said, 'And need enough we have of you' (555. 11). From all accounts, however, Needham was not the man to be clapped upon the back. Sir Ralph Radcliffe of the Priory, who greatly admired him, used to clap him on the back also and call him 'Father Needham' (539. 153). But throughout his life Needham maintained a portentous gravity. His own daughter declared she had not heard him laugh more than twice in her life (574. 22). But 'he was affable,' urges Isaac James, son of that same daughter, and therefore anxious to be kind, 'proficient in astronomy, and something of a poet' (574. 22). He seems to have added one hundred and thirty-five members to the Church in the course of his ministry, and a gallery to the chapel. He was also instrumental in getting meeting-houses opened in the neighbouring villages of Willian, Ippollitts, Gosmore and Offley. 'He was a burning and shining light,' said John Wilson's grandson, who, on the 10th of February, 1742/3, preached Needham's funeral sermon, 'and so acceptable were his labours that few Ministers have been so well attended; nor did I ever see a larger number of men in any congregation among the Dissenters' (523). Unfortunately only one of his sermons has survived: that preached at the funeral of Samuel Marsom, the aged pastor of Luton, on the 26th of January, 1725/6. As one reads one is made to feel Needham's deep concern for the righteousness that exalts a nation, and his distress in the face of that dull and gross contentment that was spreading itself more and more over the land: 'We must never thro' carlessness or weariness let down the hands of faith and prayer either for ourselves or the church of God. . . . We must watch against a secure, sensual, worldly and lukewarm frame of heart, which alas is sadly growing upon us' (522).

It was in his own pulpit, preaching to his own people, that he was struck down at length in his fifty-eighth year. 'My flesh and heart fail me,' he cried out, 'but God is my strength.' For a time he rallied, and then, says Wilson, 'had an easy passage under the Light of God's Countenance, filled with much comfort and Holy joy.' It was one of his dying requests that his funeral sermon should be taken from *Acts* 20. 24, 25—the text chosen

by himself for the sermon he had not been able to conclude. From the choice it seems as though he had been made to know his end, and had resolved to preach his own funeral sermon: 'None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.' Another dying request was that little might be said about him—a wish that we have been careful to observe (523).

XVII

On account of Needham's death, says the Church-book, 'A Sollom fast was appointed to be kept with humiliation and prayer, that the brethren might humble themselves greatly before God for their own sins and especially for the Church's sins, which may have been a great ingredient to cause God to remove so valuable a Minister and Pastor from us. All hearts engaged in fervent prayer to God to give us his Holy Spirit to direct and guide us in our consultations and make a clear way to the choice of another Pastor' (513. 3). On this occasion the choice was not long delayed. Already—even before Needham's death—the Church had made trial of one Samuel James, son of the Pastor at Hemel Hempstead, and had found him to be 'a very deserving and hopeful young Minister.' Now, 'in this our great necessity,' he came again 'to supply,' and within three months the members declared themselves 'fully satisfyed with the Supply that God had been pleased to hand forth to us,' and desired that 'he would incline to accept the church's call to the arduous work of a Pastor, and prayed that God would double the portion of His spirit upon him, the more to fitt and capacitate him therefor' (513. 4).

In accepting their call, James made it clear that he would in no way depart from the principles of open communion as laid down by his predecessor: 'Saints as saints, notwithstanding some small differences in circumstances, so that they were all under the profession of baptism one way or the other—for that is essential' (513. 4). It was not only Needham's principles the new pastor espoused, but his daughter Mary also, and by her became the father of eleven children (574. 27). The thirty years'

ministry so propitiously begun was to prove more fruitful perhaps than any in the long history of this Church. At a time when the cause of religion seemed altogether dead, here at Salem Chapel James brought about a remarkable revival. Partly, he says in his diary, July 20, 1751, 'by the good old doctrines such as were taught their fathers by honest John Bunyan,' partly by the prayers of those young men and women and ministers of the neighbourhood who assembled almost daily at his house, but most of all by the unfaltering example he set before them: 'May my conversation be in heaven, and my food Christ and the covenant. These are better than all the world' (546. 139). 'Blessed be God,' he writes in the Church-book as, one after another, the new members come forward with their testimonies, 'blessed be God for such a harvest of souls. May all the glory be rendered to him and our humility and thankfulness, not our pride, be promoted' (513. 83). In the year 1771 alone he received twenty-nine into communion, and altogether gave the right hand of fellowship to one hundred and ninety-five. Nor were these the only outward and visible signs of the Church's growth. In 1752 the field adjoining the chapel was acquired for a burial-ground, and ten years later the chapel itself was again enlarged. 'This day, May 24th,' he notes in his diary, 'they began to enlarge the meeting-house, it being too straight for the auditory, in the gallery especially. O that my heart may be more and more enlarged and kept humble' (546. 150). In spite of his diffidence ('this villain *Shame*,' as good Bunyan expresses it), he fought every Apollyon in his path. When the Vicar of Stotfold delivered a course of sermons on the iniquity of Dissent in 1753, he championed his despised and rejected people, and trounced the cleric in print. That is why he records with such pleasure in the same year the conversion of two new members, 'brought off from the Established Church,' in the next village to Stotfold, 'and I hope both born again and brought to Jesus which is best of all' (546. 147). When the so-called Free School at Hitchin shut its doors in the faces of Dissenters in 1751, he moved heaven and earth, and incidentally the Attorney-General, to get them opened again (559. 647). With his own people he was just as firm. The pernicious custom that had grown up in Needham's time of buying and selling pews was brought to an abrupt end. The property in these was to rest no longer in the seat-holders but in the Church itself (513. 54).

The scruples that some members entertained about sharing their privileged inheritance in Christ's kingdom with those in heathen lands were sternly overruled. In 1766, twenty-six years before the foundation of the Baptist Missionary Society, James invited Samson Occum, a North American Indian, to preach the gospel from his pulpit. The collection in aid of a school for Occum's tribe amounted to the extraordinary sum of £84 (559. 647).

In the exercise of Church discipline James was adamant. Erring brethren, if they showed by their repentance that their 'backslidings were healed,' were to be forgiven, but not seventy times seven, nor even seven. They must remember that they were as men set apart. They must keep themselves unspotted from the world. If they brought reproach upon the pure and undefiled religion of the Church, they must suffer the consequences. That the pastor's standards were too high for many of the members is clear from the numerous offences that are entered in the book. Brother Traveller, for example, has to be cut off 'for drinking to excess, profaning the sabbath, and continued obstinacy in denying such things as were laid to his charge, though some of them too notorious' (513. 9, 18). Brother Mainard, 'for his unbecoming walk in drinking to excess' (513. 61). Brother Dunton, for adultery, 'though not without very deep concern sitting on the face of every member who was present' (513. 37). Sister Robinson, 'for irregularities in conduct.' Brothers Hine and Child are requested 'to have conversation with our Friend Pack on account of irregularities in conduct and errors in doctrine' (513. 37). The case of Brother Carter, who had married his deceased wife's sister, was recommended to the prayer and consideration of the members. But the more they considered it the more difficult it became. Neither Brother nor Sister Carter would 'acknowledge any uneasiness in the uncommon step they have taken.' As for the members, 'some look upon the marriage as Unlawful, nay no less than Incestuous'; they held by *Leviticus* 18. 16, and argued that the special exception in *Deuteronomy* 25. 5 was peculiar to the Jews. Others felt that the prohibition was founded upon the Ceremonial Law, long since abrogated and abolished. The real point at issue, according to the pastor, was 'whether the Great Lawgiver may (consistent with the absolute purity of His nature) dispence with his Moral Precepts.' And that was the poser which they put to the 'severall Sister churches of London

(Mr. Stennett's and Mr. Wilson's), Luton, Bedford, Hertford and Hitchin (Independent) for their advice.' That of the Bedford Church has been preserved and seems to have been adopted: 'We are pretty unanimous in thinking that the Law of God is not clear concerning the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of such a marriage; that therefore it were much to be wished they who had ventured upon it had not done it: especially considering that so many wise and good men esteem it sinful, and that it has occasioned much offence and trouble to some serious Christians: but since they themselves saw no iniquity in it, and it cannot be certainly proved that there is any, we are of opinion they should not be excommunicated for what they have done' (513. 19–20).

XVIII

The only other case we shall mention is that of Brother Saunders, whose excommunication for excessive drinking was pronounced by James in an epistle which we should have liked to quote in full: 'Friend Saunders, I am desired as the mouth of the Church to inform you that this day was set apart solemnly to seek God for direction on your account, at the close of which meeting the Church thought it their duty to withdraw their Relation from you as a Brother, so that now you are no longer to be looked upon as a member with us. Had you been present, methinks you must have been melted to behold with what grief and sorrow of heart the Church proceeded in this last but awful duty towards you as a member. But Christ must be obeyed, the rule which he has left us in his word be carefully attended to, the glory of a Redeemer consulted, and appointed means for keeping up the purity of and holiness of his house used. I beseech you therefore in the bowels of mercy and tenderness censure not the Church's procedure, but rather smite upon your own breast, and turn all your resentment against your Sin, which is the alone cause of it. 'Tis sad, my Friend, to be cut off from the Church of Christ, to be separated from the Communion of her Saints on earth; but what is that compared with a lasting separation from Christ himself, to be thrust away from him, be bid depart into infinite torment, to spend a long forever there amongst devils and damned spirits, where there is nothing but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? Awful thought indeed, fearful sentence! Yet give me leave to tell you in all

love and faithfulness to your soul, this will be your case, if the Lord does not graciously appear and heal your backslidings. Be not deceived. Drunkards shall have no part in the kingdom of God, 1 *Corinthians* 6. 10. Yea, the Lord has declared it shall be bitter to the drinkers of it, *Isaiah* 24. 9. May you be humbling yourself at the foot of God, and be much seeking to Him, that this Grace of Repentance may be wrought in you by His blessed Spirit, that true evangelical sorrow may fill your heart, and the fruit of Holiness appear in your life, that so the dishonour which you have brought upon your profession may be wiped off, the deep wound you have given to Christ be healed, his grieved Church comforted, and your own precious soul saved in the day of our Lord ' (513. 14).

The days of Solemn Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, which supported the Church in these times of ' heavie affliction,' were sometimes appointed for other emergencies, e.g. in 1744 ' on account of several persons under concern, being more than ordinarily buffeted by Satan, held down under Unbelief, and driven even to the borders of Despair.' ' 1745 Sept. 26th. On account of the nation,' the battle of Prestonpans having been won by the Pretender only five days before. ' 1747. On account of the Infectious Distemper (xxviii) amongst the cattle.' ' 1763. On account of our deadness and declension and to pray for a fresh downpouring of the Spirit both on Minister and people.' ' 1765. On account of the sad decay of vital religion ' (513. 20, 29, 45, 60, 79, 80).

The thoroughness of Pastor James's administration is further exemplified by his keeping of the Church accounts. On his first coming in 1742, he purchased a folio which he entitled *The Churches Booke as to its Stocke in Monie*; and, fortunately for us, who otherwise would know so little of the domestic side of this Church's life, he sees that every receipt and every expenditure is entered. Here are a few items taken almost at random: ' 1743. Extraordinary expenses since Mr. Needham's death. Gave Mr. James for preaching Lord's Day, 15s. For a bottle of wine for Mr. James, 2s.; 1745. Paid Widow Slow attending persons to be baptized and takeing care of their clothes, 2s. 6d.;

xxviii. This resulted in William Taylor being appointed Inspector of Cattle at a wage of 5s. a week, ' by reason of the Contagious Distemper being brought into the Half Hundred of Hitchin amongst Horned Cattle ' (Herts Q.S. Rolls under 1749. Not calendared in Hardy).

1757. Gave Walter Field for seting the Psalms to Michaelmas, 2s. 6d.; 1758. Paid for a pare of Temple Spectacles for Thos. Ashwood to repeete Sermonds, 1s. 6d.; 1769. Paid for a Mouse Trap for the Vestry, 9d.; 1771. Paid Sister Dobbs for scouring the cups and plats, 5s.; 1771. Paid Mr. James for a Psalm and Him Book to lay in the Pulpet, 3s.' (524).

The reference to the 'Him Book' reminds one that the last two years of James's ministry were clouded by a division in his congregation upon the subject of singing. The older members, led by Richard Angell, one of the Deacons, would have liked to have no singing at all: 'The tunes were too light and airy and not fit to be used in the solemn service of God.' But they could not escape from the fact that the Baptists had been the first to popularize the singing of English Hymns as part of public worship. With Needham they had been able to come to terms. He withdrew his proposal to introduce Keach's *Spiritual Melody, containing near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns*, and they, on their side, consented to sing the *New England Psalms*. James, however, had a good voice and was a musician of some merit. As early as 1754 he was hankering after a choir. 'This evening,' he says in his diary, under December 2nd, 'several young women met at my house to be instructed in singing. Some of them performed well. Chose to have the men apart and women apart, to cut off all reflections, and prevent such meetings being a snare, as I doubt they have often been by both sexes meeting together' (546. 143). In 1771, being unable to endure the *New England Psalms* any longer, he took his life in his hands and supplied the congregation with attractively bound copies of Isaac Watts's Hymns (15). At once a great discord arose. The second deacon, John Foster, sided with his pastor. There is still preserved his well-thumbed and benoted copy of that interesting treatise entitled *Reasons for and against singing in Private or Public Worship considered with Candor, wherein the Ground of that Controverted Practice is impartially laid open.* David Rees, 1737.' His notes and interjections in the margins show how deeply he had pondered this problem. But Angell was irreconcilable about these 'human composures,' and as an angel of wrath he proved a host in himself, a most unheavenly host. 'A variety of incidental circumstances,' as the Church-book expresses it, 'operating in both parties (as is usual) produced many unbecoming expressions, conversations, letters, papers and disputes,

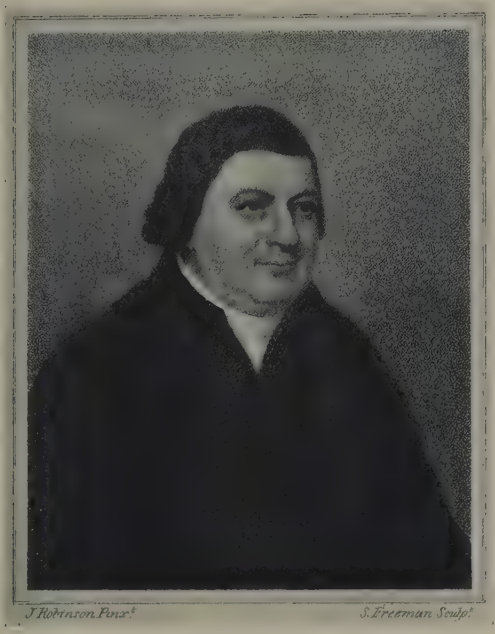
tending to the subversion of the Church, and destructive of the peace of the whole congregation, as well as to the general grief of the neighbouring Churches, and to the offence of the world' (513. 100–101).

The contention may be said to have killed the Pastor. He was 'seized with a threatening disorder which lay chiefly on his spirits' (513. 85). For a time he lingered, and then, 'on Lord's Day morning, August 22, 1773, his departed soul joined the celestial choir.' His death was as inspiring as his life. It reminds one not a little of the latter end of those pious souls whose lives and deaths he had himself chronicled in his *Abstract of the Gracious Dealings of God with several Eminent Christians in their Conversion and Sufferings* (525). 'A few days before,' says his son, 'he became depressed and called for Sibbes' *Soul's Conflict*, which, however, could not be found. When his deacon Foster came to say farewell, he betrayed a very human shrinking: "Ah, Mr. Foster, I have *thought* about death, I have *read* about death, I have *talked* about death, and I have *preached* about death; but now that I am ill and in my own apprehensions very near death, I find that to be quite a different thing to what it was to think about it, to read about it, to talk about it, or to preach about it when I was well." But in his latest moments the spirit of adoption was upon him; and he frequently called upon God under that endearing character, "My Father, my Father"; whilst the very last words he articulately spoke and which he uttered with no small emphasis were these triumphant expressions: "Victory, Victory"' (513. 154). May we not add in Bunyan's words, 'And all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.'

XIX

In her 'state of widowhood,' the Church received much comfort from the ministerial abilities of one John Geard, a student of the Bristol Academy (xxix); he was 'a means under God to keep the Auditory together, visibly blessed to some of them for their souls' good, and very useful to the whole church for their great edification' (513. 89). The first sermon he preached to them was from *Acts* 19. 2: 'Have ye received the

xxix. The invitation came to him as he was spending his vacation in Cornwall. With the abounding energy that he possessed all his life, he had already ridden 1,240 miles and preached 118 times in the space of six weeks (539).



THE REV. JOHN GEARD

From a painting by J. Robinson

Holy Ghost?' After six months' trial of 'the gifts and graces God hath been pleased to bestow on him,' and after prayer and fasting 'to know God's mind and will,' the brethren besought Geard 'to take on you the Pastoral Office and oversight of the Church as an Under Shepherd under the great Head of the Church, for we cannot view it otherwise than to be the Lord's doings in sending you amongst us as an answer to prayer' (513. 89). Their choice was undoubtedly inspired. 'As a preacher,' said Edward Foster, 'his talents were not superior, but as a Christian Minister he was a living epistle, known and read of all men' (555. 7). It was said by another: 'I do not believe there is a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not; but I do believe there is not a person living with fewer imperfections than John Geard' (555. 7). He had a healthy dislike of merely clever people and of text-splitters, commentators and theologians in particular. In this he was one with honest John Bunyan, whom in appearance he so closely resembled. 'Once on a time,' he used to say, 'Bunyan was sitting with the Foster Brothers in their house at Preston when someone asked him to explain that verse in *Romans* 8. 19, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"; to which he made this cautious and shrewd reply: "All that I can say in answer to that question is that the Scripture is wiser than I," which was as good as saying that he did not know the meaning of that passage; and this was much wiser in him than it would have been to have attempted to explain what he did not understand, and thus darken counsel by words without knowledge' (548).

Geard's strength also lay in his holy and unabashed simplicity; he knew that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. 'In the earlier part of my life,' he writes in his *Memoirs*, 'I was exceedingly harassed by Satanic temptations of a most distressing nature' (539). But these by the grace of God had long since been trodden underfoot. In mind as in body he was solid, robust, unshakable; in all times of calamity and unfaith steadfast as a rock. He knew Him in whom he believed. His God was no 'stream of tendency, no supernaturalistic hypothesis, no transcendental symbol or synthesis, but the Lord of Hosts of the Old Testament.' He would have no lot or part with the suave doctrine of sufficing grace, so pleasant and propitious, as the Anglicans had found, to the frailty of men. Whilst

he remained their pastor, he and his people would follow the footsteps of the Divine Ascetic who trod the winepress of the wrath of God. It was this integrity of soul that won him the respect and in time the affection of all. 'He was a most affectionate pastor,' said one who knew him well, 'living in the love of both old and young, and held in high esteem by all, whether Churchmen or Dissenters.' His own people at first feared, and afterwards loved, him far too well to offend. The cases of discipline in his time are few: Susanna Lane, 'for imprudent behaviour with another woman's husband'; Lydia Lightfoot, 'for uncleanness'; Caleb Pitt, 'for his uncharitableness'; William Bunyan, for 'neglecting the means of grace' (513. 134, 144, 210).

With the Anglicans he did have an occasional, if not an annual, brush over tithe and Church rates, for the old antagonism was not so much dead as sleeping. The Church by law established could still be very provoking, e.g. in 1793, when, in a spirit of infinite condescension, Convocation issued an additional prayer, asking the Almighty 'to show pity to those who have the misfortune to Dissent from us.' 'Where Dissent in religion is,' said Archbishop Sandys, 'there can hardly be consent in love.' But in the end Geard wore these prejudices down. Long before the close of his pastorate of fifty-five years he was looked up to as the moral and ceremonial leader of the parish. It was he who organized petitions, reformed abuses, and called the united congregations to prayer in times of peril. The Church-book in his day is almost a register of local and national affairs. There are solemn days, fast days, or thanksgiving days: in 1778 'for the American War which still continues'; in 1780 'on account of the war with France, Spain and America'; in 1780 'on account of the state of the nation and the situation of religion which are truly calamitous and alarming'; in 1788 'for the centenary of the Glorious Revolution which the Divine Providence effected in the year 1688, in consequence of which it is that Protestant Dissenters enjoy all their legal liberties and privileges' (xxx); in 1788 'on account of the situation of our beloved Sovereign, King George the Third, whose circumstances are extremely melancholy' (xxxi); in 1789, July 23, 'with a par-

xxx. In his diary and in his *Memoirs* Geard is constantly praising God for the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and pitching into those 'Royal rascals,' as he calls Charles and James the Second (539, 40).

xxxi. He had become insane.

ticular view to the approaching harvest, it having rained with little comparative intermission for above five weeks together'; in 1789 'honestly and faithfully to remonstrate against the infamous practice of giving largesse at the close of harvest to farm labourers, who prostitute this money in the general to the most shameless intemperance'; in 1801 'on account not only of the calamitous war in which we are still engaged but of the increased dearness of the necessaries of life, the quartern loaf having risen to 1s. 8d.'; in 1805 'on account of an important victory off cape Trafalgar'; in 1811 'to protest against Lord Sidmouth's Bill, which would greatly infringe the rights and liberties of Protestant Dissenters' (xxxii) (513. 108, 113, 118, 130, 147, 149, 153, 202, 218, 238). One is the more glad to observe this serious concern of the Church with secular affairs, because the Nonconformists as a body have been too often accused of shutting themselves up in their stuffy little chapels—a particular people alone with their particular God—and of leaving the world at large to go to the Devil. In Hitchin, at any rate in Geard's day, it was not so.

XX

In the life of the Church, no less than that of the parish, Geard brought the same breadth of sympathy to bear. It was his doing that Salem Chapel in 1776 joined that federation of Baptist Churches known as the Eastern Association (513. 106). 'Paid Mr. Geard's Expences at the Sosiation, 10s.' (524). It was his large outlook that made the congregation redouble its efforts for missionary work. In 1793 they were supporting 'a black Baptist missionary of exemplary character' who was propagating the Gospel and counteracting the iniquitous slave trade in Sierra Leone. The next year they were supporting two other missionaries who were 'spreading the gospel amongst the heathen of Indostan' (xxxiii). In 1798 they collected £23 for those twenty-nine missionaries who were setting sail for the Pacific in a vessel purchased by the Society as a missionary ship.

xxxii. Within a space of forty-eight hours the petitions of 600 congregations were drawn up, signed and presented to the House of Lords. Their Lordships were so alarmed at the hornet's nest they had raised that the Bill was promptly rejected.

xxxiii. In 1813 they paid one guinea 'to Mr. Eade's Clark for drawing up a petition to Parliament for permission to send missions to India without control' (524).

But the 'poor heathen inhabitants of those remote countries,' for whom the brethren here had prayed and stinted themselves and saved, remained in heathen darkness still, for the good ship *Duff* was captured by a French privateer off the South American coast (513. 169, 175, 195).

In further extension of Church work, a Sunday School was founded in 1812, though that was due not so much to his own labours as to those of his sister-in-law, Ann Bradley (xxxiv). His task was to overcome the scruples of the members, which proved no easy matter. But the task which tried Geard to the uttermost was that which had killed his predecessor, namely, to get his untuneful brethren to sing. He was himself possessed of a resonant bass voice and rejoiced to sing; but there was still Richard Angell to reckon with and those 'caterwauling saints,' as the pastor called them, who would only mew the Psalms. At last, however, by persuading the pastors of three neighbouring churches to sit in judgment upon their differences, and to hear charges and counter-charges from 8 o'clock in the morning to 11 o'clock at night, the pastor got Angell expelled from the office of deacon and the use of Watts's Hymns approved (513. 99–104). For a long time, however, Angell's party was strong enough to stipulate that only one tune should be allowed, and that was made to do duty for every kind of hymn, be it of long or short or common metre. It must have required some ingenuity to adapt it with any degree of satisfaction to a sensitive ear. But, whatever the difficulties, there was usually some brother or sister who could bring the congregation through. Drawing upon his own memories, a local pastor, the Rev. R. W. Jackson, has shown how it could be done: 'Whilst the congregation was floundering amid the extra syllables, he would halt in the middle of a line and exclaim, "Pucker it in, friends!" and they puckered it in.'

Having reasoned his people out of this absurdity, Geard introduced a variety of tunes adapted to the varying measures of the hymns. But in a rash hour a tune was tried which demanded the repetition of one line in each stanza. This was too much for some of the old supporters of the place, who inveighed in resolute terms against an innovation so alarming.

xxxiv. An account of this good woman will be included in the volume of *Hitchin Worthies*, together with extracts from the diary and register which she kept in connection with the school (542).

They even threatened to walk out of the chapel if any repeating tune were sung. It was contrary, they declared, to the whole tenor of Scripture, which nowhere sanctioned a repetition. But that was where they were wrong. Admitting the propriety of referring everything if possible to the authority of the Scriptures, and having secured the adherence of the objectors to this principle, the pastor proceeded to prove that repetition *was* sanctioned in the Bible. To their confusion, he quoted *Jeremiah* 22. 29: 'O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the word of the Lord.' The proof was deemed satisfactory, and those who had been content to sing short metre to a long-metre tune became in time habitual, if not willing, listeners to better-adapted and more skilfully arranged compositions. Not unlikely the part they themselves took in those more elaborate singings served in some measure to prevent anyone being overwhelmed with the mere sensual gratifications occasioned from music as a science and an art (xxxv).

Apart from this one quarrel, and some 'shakings of the head' over the introduction of Lessons or Readings from the Scriptures in the Sunday services, there was nothing but concord and affection between the pastor and his flock. Over the lapse of a hundred years there lingers a whimsical story which shows how his people would vie with one another to do him kindness. One of them, it seems, went on Michaelmas Day into the market, bought the biggest goose he could find, and left it with his own and the season's compliments at the minister's house. But Geard's housekeeper, like a careful woman, had already procured a goose. She told her master so. They considered the problem together. At last he said to Betty: 'You and I really cannot eat two geese, and, much as I dislike the idea, I think you must take the gift goose into the market and sell it for what it will bring.' She did so. Half an hour later there was a knock at the door. It was another member of the congregation holding the very same goose. 'I chose this fine bird in the market. Will you please ask Mr. Geard to accept it with my very best wishes?' A still more difficult interview ensued between Betty and her master, but the same decision was taken. An hour later another knock at the door; another member of the congregation; the same magnificent goose. 'Betty,' roared the old minister as soon as the door was shut, 'take it away in God's

xxxv. This account is taken almost *literatim* from the description of the controversy which Geard gave to William Paxton of St. Neots (539).

name and put it in the larder. It is quite clear to me now. The Lord has *predestined* us to have this goose ' (576).

Clear in mind, unclouded in faith, hale and hearty in body—smoking his pipe (xxxvi) and eating goose-pie to the end—the old minister laboured on to his eighty-second year, having never, he said, been laid aside by illness for a single Sabbath. Another seven years he lasted after his resignation, with neither labour nor sorrow; and then, on November 27, 1838, was interred in the burial-ground where he had buried more than eight hundred of his people. One may say of him what he had said of Dr. John Gill, 1697–1771: ' When he died, there was a great man fell in Israel ' (539. 89). The whole parish mourned for him as one man and followed him to his grave (574. 35).

XXI

Wilson, Needham, James, Geard—there, indeed, is an apostolical succession of which any Church might be proud. Between them they held the pastorate for one hundred and fifty-four years, and those the longest, most difficult years of all. It may be that they loom larger to our view because of the intervening mist of time. But somehow the ten ministers who followed them at short intervals in the hundred years from 1831 to the present time seem men of a different stature. As one of them observed in referring to the long history of Salem Chapel: ' My predecessors were no ordinary men. One might well shrink from the attempt to continue that history, and to act worthy of those traditions, were it not for the fact that behind all visible instruments and agents the Eternal, Invisible God will carry on and complete His own most glorious work.' In this chapter, which has already outrun its appointed length, we cannot dwell upon the devoted work of these recent pastors. It is almost of living memory, and the story may be read at large in *The History of Tilehouse Street Baptist Church*, written for its 250th Anniversary by the Reverend James McCleery, pastor from 1918–1926. There are a few outstanding events, however, which must be chronicled here. In 1844, during the pastorate of John Broad (who sacrificed a business yielding £700 a year to serve God on

xxxvi. Francis Lucas, who greatly admired him, says: ' He was a great smoker, and used every now and then as he smoked to take a bite of an apple. He always had one by him when he took his pipe.'

THE REV. JOHN BROAD

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

a stipend of £80), the present chapel was built at a cost of £2,300 (552). Its Italianesque front gave great offence to some of the older members; it was, they said, as contrary to the teaching and example of Bunyan as was the Golden Calf to that of Moses. But to the majority of those who worshipped there it was a source of pride and satisfaction to have this imposing structure, not lurking in a back lane like the old chapel as if afraid of being seen, but conforming and adding no little dignity to the King's highway. Broad looked upon his own creation with such joy that he could hardly tear himself away. All the Sunday through he would sit there, and take his meals there too, lest 'going out into the world he should lose touch with the atmosphere of devotion' (576). The services in his time were most revivalistic. Pastor and people were frequently in floods of tears. There were inquiries after every service, testimonies openly delivered, and frequent professions of faith. George Short, 1858–1868, who succeeded John Broad (xxxvii), erected a minister's house, did something 'to prevent the draught and mitigate the cold' in the new chapel, and, 'after mature consideration,' introduced *The New Baptist Hymn Book*, with an organ to play the tunes (574. 43–5). During the ministry of John Aldis, 1868–1877, six members were set apart to form a daughter Church in the Walsworth Road for those who lived in that distant part of the parish. It was also resolved to build a Bunyan Chapel at Preston, 'to be worked as a preaching station in connection with the parent church' (574. 45–7). Thomas Williams, in the course of his short ministry, 1890–1893, did much to improve the chapel. Nearly £2,000 was spent on the enlargement of the organ, the provision of a new pulpit, and a heating and ventilating apparatus (574. 51–2). In 1919 the 250th anniversary of the Church was celebrated, and by a curious coincidence the members that year were found to number exactly 250 (575). In 1925 some new model schools and an assembly hall were added at a cost of £5,000 in memory of those members of the Church who fell in the Great War and as a

xxxvii. It is amusing to notice that this Short who succeeded Broad added to the oddity by marrying a Square. On the last event this epigram was penned by Lawson Thompson of Hitchin:—

'A deed surpassing human thought,
This man to do could dare;
He brought her round and made her Short
Who had been long Miss Square.'

thank-offering on the part of the family of George Wagstaff Russell, a deacon of the Church, and a superintendent of the Sunday School, for over forty years.

* * * * *

It has been the habit of those few historians who have condescended to notice the Dissenters to stress ' their rigorous and moral strictness, their subjugation of sense and appetite, their coldness to every element in worship external to the believer's own soul, their dogma unyielding as cast iron.' They would appear to have noticed nothing more. But it is not difficult to discover another side. Out of their protesting and dissenting, as anyone with eyes may see, they have developed a constructive Christianity full of fervour and loving-kindness, a religion that satisfies the intellect and marches with the times. Recognizing that the things they once stood for have by their efforts been merged into the spiritual inheritance of man, they have altered the line of battle. No longer do they dissent, no longer protest against the ' unyielding dogma ' of an Established Church, but with that Church and with all true Churches they march as in a common cause against the forces of Mammon, Unrighteousness and Infidelity. Here is a battlefield after a Puritan's own heart. In a world still indifferent, if not hostile, to plant once more the standard of Jesus Christ, and in His holy name and by the invincible sign of His cross at last to overcome.

Denne, Hobson, Bunyan, Holcroft, Wilson, Needham, James, Geard—all are departed. They fought a good fight. They kept the faith. They are with God. But ' the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.' Those who are baptized with the baptism that these men of Hitchin were baptized with need never be afraid, for as one of their own pastors finely said: ' We believe in the mighty energy of God's truth, in the divine efficacy of Christ's work, in the presence and power of the Eternal Spirit to apply both the truth and the work to the hearts and consciences of men.'

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS (i)

I

THE history of Congregationalism or Independency in Hitchin may be said to begin with Katherine Chidley, the mother of that Samuel Chidley who in the Commonwealth became Lord of Hitchin Manor (see Vol. I, pp. 212–221). She herself dwelt sometimes at Bow Lane in London, sometimes with her son at Hitchin, and sometimes, 'being hunted by the Bishop's blood-hounds,' she found it convenient to have no fixed abode. In 1641 she published a remarkable pamphlet of 82 pages entitled *The justification of the Independant Churches of Christ: briefly declaring that the Congregations of the Saints ought not to have dependency in Government upon any other or direction in worship from any other, than their Head and Lawgiver* (580). This apologia, she modestly explains, 'is not laid down in a Schollerick way, but by the plaine truth of the Holy Scripture.' It is, nevertheless, a keen, vigorous and amusing piece of writing. Perhaps she was not quite so modest as her preface would suggest. Though a woman and a lay person, she is confident of her capacity to dogmatize on these high matters: 'A layman fearing God is much more fit to understand the Holy Scripture than a proud and arrogant priest, yea than the Bishop himselfe, be hee never so great and glittering in all his Pontificals.' With one wave of her pen she dismisses all 'hireling priests,' and all that hierarchy in authority over them. She will not hear of 'Arch-Bishops, Diocesan-Bishops, Deanes, Prebends and the rest of that rabble; they have a King over them which is the Angell of the Bottomlesse pit, who is said to be the great red Dragon, the Devill.' What with their 'altars and images, ceremonies, book-worship,

i. The author desires to acknowledge the assistance given by Dr. Albert Peel, M.A., Editor of the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, who kindly read and revised this chapter in its manuscript form. The author has received most generous assistance also from Mr. Halley Stewart of Harpenden, who has made a particular study of the history of the Hertfordshire Independent Churches.

censures, citations, canons, and excommunications they are dependent on Councills, synods and churches—even it seems upon the Church of Rome; whereas we are Independent and are resolved to stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ hath set us.' She is disposed to admit 'that all the armies that belonge to a kingdome ought to be under the banner of their owne king'; but so far as the 'particular Congregations of Christ' are concerned, 'they are to be guided only by the Lawes of their owne Captain Christ, who rideth before them with his garments dipt in blood, and they follow after him riding upon white horses.' Therefore, she declares, in summing up the whole matter, 'it is not only lawfull, but the duty of all those who are informed of the evills of the Church of England to separate themselves from them, and such as doe adhere unto them, and set up true churches of their owne.'

Not all men saw their duty as clearly as Katherine Chidley. Independents there were, of course, in hundreds at Hitchin in the Civil War; it was the ruling faction in Cromwell's Army. But the orthodox divines who preached by order of Parliament at St. Mary's, and Thomas Kidner, who through the Commonwealth laboured there as vicar, were so nearly Independent in their views that it seemed needless 'to set up a true church of their owne.' As Katherine Chidley scornfully put it, they were content to be 'semi-separates,' biding their time and hoping, soon or late, to make the priestly and aristocratic system of the old Church of England conform to their new Congregational way. But that was not to be. In 1655 they had raised £11 4s. 11d. in Hitchin 'for their poor brethren the Protestants of Piedmont,' little guessing how soon they, too, would be hunted down by the 'Bishop's bloodhounds' for their own religious opinions. At the Savoy Conference of Congregational Churches in 1658 they had formulated a declaration of faith, 'a great and special work of the Holy Ghost,' which was to restore to England the pure and primitive ordinance of Jesus Christ. But it was the impure King and the deformed, degenerate Church of England, with her Primate and prelates and hireling priests, that were to be restored, and it was they themselves who were to be driven out of their promised land into a howling wilderness of persecution.

THE OLD BACK STREET MEETING-HOUSE, 1690–1855

II

In the preceding chapter we have told the story of that persecution in some detail, and, as the Hitchin Independents of that early period were almost of one communion with the Baptists, we do not purpose to tell it over again. Those few who endured to the end emerged triumphant from the ordeal, for they had proved the truth of what Paul Hobson, their chaplain in the Civil War, had said: 'Let men goe on to revile and abuse you, and study names of Factious and Independents and the like to make you odious. No matter. Christ assists you and Christ hath names full of love and sweetness for you' (504. 43). Too few as yet to form a church of their own, they had from the first days of the persecution united themselves for worship with the Baptists; the more willingly because Holcroft, Oddy, Lock, Waite and Beare, who ministered to that body, were all Independent in their views.

In spite of their 'love and sweetness,' however, the uniting was not in any sense a union; rather the reverse. As early as 1669 the little group of Independents, on some scruple of conscience, withdrew themselves from their Baptist brethren; and it needed a powerful protest from John Owen, the Independent leader in London, to make them reunite. They must, as he pointed out, be loyal to their own declarations. Clause XXIV of the Savoy Declaration of 1658, which he had helped to draw up, had been explicit on this point: 'Saints living in one city or town ought rather to join in one church for their mutual strengthening and edification than to set up many distinct societies.' As the Baptist Church at Hitchin was based on the principle of 'open-communion,' and allowed 'eas and satisfaction to them that differ from us in point of Baptism,' Owen could not see why these 'Brethren and Companions in Tribulation' should split asunder. Let them study to dwell with one another in peace and concord, 'and in the Kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ' (513. 10).

In 1677, however, when the Hitchin Baptists chose a pastor of their own persuasion, the little handful of Independents, Brothers Wilkinson, Sheppard, and Cooper, and Sisters Jackson and Flindall, 'desired for their better edification to be dismissed to the Church of Christ about Cambridge,' in the charge of Francis Holcroft, who had been their stay and comfort for so

many years (632. 645). A letter proposing reconciliation which followed them from Hitchin the next year was left unanswered. Undoubtedly these early Independents were difficult to please. Too conscious, perhaps, of their high calling, they would not exist in a state of dependence on any other Church. Not even with the Saints at Cambridge were they able to find 'eas and satisfaction.'

By the year 1687 they had decided to try another change, and join themselves to 'the church in and about Hertford belonging to Mr. Haworth,' a man distinguished not only for his piety but for his proficiency in the three learned languages Hebrew, Latin and Greek (606. 2. 300). The distance was sixteen miles, but they professed themselves willing to 'sit down' with his congregation, walking or riding there as best they could. The Hertford Church offered to meet them occasionally half-way at Bragbury End, and the pastor, on his part, agreed to preach to them at Hitchin once a month (581). For this purpose, as they had no meeting-place of their own, they were driven to approach the Baptist brethren whom they had deserted, and ask for the use of their barn: 'This we propound to you for love and peace sake, also being sensible that to set up another meeting by ourselves would look ill and be a means of giving occasion for reproach and might be to the dishonour of God.' On their side the Baptists were cautious; they agreed to lend the barn, but, they added, 'if ever we shall find just cause to alter our minds, we will let you know of it' (513).

Unhappily the cause was not long in coming, for the Independents were caught angling for souls to which they were not entitled. That the souls of the ungodly should be won by Haworth and his people was all to the glory of God, but that the souls of Baptist members should be won over was quite another thing. This was an occasion of reproach. If God was not dishonoured, they were. They accordingly cancelled the agreement, and made it as difficult as they could for those members who had allowed themselves to be subverted in their own particular barn: '1688. Bro. Edward Hitchin, and afterwards Bro. Henry Fuller, desired of the church a dismission unto the church walking with Mr. Hayward (*sic*). Their reasons being considered, the church refused, judging them not a suffisent ground. Afterwards, both these was received by Mr. Hayworth and part of the people or church to whom he belongeth at

Hitching, without the consent of the church with hume [whom] they walked ' (513).

III

For the next three years the Independents met where they could. In summer, on the village green at Preston, then known as Cromwell's Green. In winter, either at Widow Heath's cottage in the same hamlet, which had been licensed in 1672, or in the farmhouse of John Harper at Maiden Croft, which was licensed in 1689. Haworth was not able to be with them often, for he was at this period much occupied with spiritual conflict in the parish where he lived. ' Let me engage you,' he implores his Church, ' night and day to pray for the poor town of Hertford, which now for a long time hath been a nest of error, and where Satan hath his seat ' (632. 537). In his stead they were fortunate enough to have for preacher one Joseph Hussey, who since 1683 had been chaplain to Sir Jonathan Keate at the Hoo (632. 649). In his preaching diary he refers to himself as ' sometime pastor of Maidencroft Meeting,' which proves that, though still attached to the Hertford Church, the Hitchin people preserved a certain local independence. In 1688 Hussey, who was not an authorized minister, submitted himself for ordination, and wrote in his diary afterwards a lively account of the ordeal (584). ' I was solemnly ordained,' he says, ' with Examinations, Confessions, Fastings and Prayer and Imposition of Hands of the Presbytery at Dr. Annesley's house in Spittle Fields London, even while the Prince of Orange, afterwards King William, was under sail for England. I disputed with the doctors in the defence of a thesis upon a question given to me in the Popish controversie.' On this burning question of the day he acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his examiners: ' We whose names are underwritten do testify concerning Mr. Joseph Hussey that under our personal knowledge he is an ordained minister of the Gospel, whose natural parts, acquired learning, soundness in the faith, Holiness of Life, and all Ministeriall abilities are so commendable that we groundedly hope for God's blessing upon his Ministry for the conversion and edification of Souls wheresoever God shall employ him.' This is signed by five only of the six examiners. The sixth was a trimmer. The Prince of Orange had set sail, and he intended to wait and see which way the wind blew. ' The sixth examiner,'

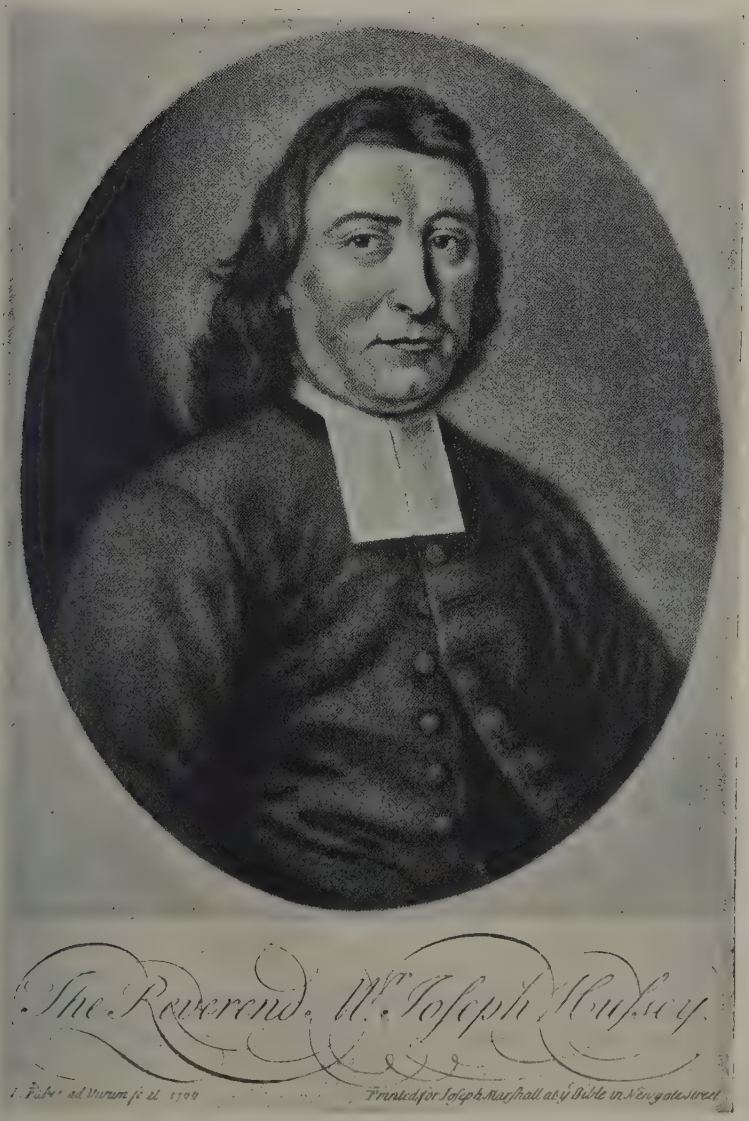
observes Hussey, 'was shie because of the cloudiness of the Times, and would neither subscribe the Examination nor be known to me' (584).

At last, in 1690, the Hitchin Independents resolved to have a chapel of their own. It was only three years since they admitted to the Baptists that 'to set up another meeting by ourselves would look ill'; but things had happened since then, and, above all, the Toleration Act had been passed.

Purchasing from Alice Bonfield a small piece of orchard in Dead Street, afterwards known as Back Street, being the north-eastern portion of the present chapel ground, they built on its site the place of worship depicted in the forefront of this chapter. The certificate of registration under the Act, dated April 26, 1690, was taken out in the name of George Wilkinson, cord-wainer, who, with Thomas Hitchin, brewer, were the first trustees of the property (632. 649). The following day Hussey preached the opening sermon, recording in his diary: 'I preached at Hitchin at the new Meeting House, Lord's Day in the afternoon, April 27. Text. *John* 8. 36: "If the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed."' Once a month Hussey continued to exhort them in sermons subsequently printed, which can be read not without profit at this present day, together with a work of his own on the office of preaching, which is even more seasonable now than when it first appeared. In this he shows himself fully conscious of his high calling. Ministers, he holds, are stewards of God and of the mysteries of God. Upstart and self-created preachers are not to be endured. But let the trained Ministers take heed they set up no wisdom of their own. It is only the *foolishness of preaching* which can save a world whose wisdom knows not God. Above all, let them beware of the lust of eloquence. It is easier to play the orator than perform the work of a Divine. 'As for me,' he concludes, 'I would choose rather to come in plainness of speech to the ears of men, than in the enticing words of Man's wisdom' (585).

IV

In its third year the chapel witnessed something in the nature of a miracle, which brought the Back Street Meeting into sudden notoriety, and caused no little stir outside in the religious world. The facts, which were attested with unusual care at the time,


The Reverend Mr. Joseph Hussey.
J. Faber ad Vivum fecit 1792
Printed for Joseph Marshall at ye Bible in Newgate Street

are these. In service as a shepherd at a farm occupied by a Mrs. Dermer, at Offley, near Hitchin, there lived one David Wright, an unfortunate young man who for fifteen years had been plagued—almost eaten up, says one account—with the King's Evil or scrofula, and could not walk without crutches. As a boy he had been touched by Charles II, but had become steadily worse; the running sores and ulcers from which he suffered caused him to keep his bed for weeks together. Those who lived at the farm with him said that his mind was just as much diseased as his body, 'being not only immoral and profane but atheistical.' On these accounts the good woman at the farm had been unwilling at first to hire him; but he had vowed to reform and had promised to go with her on Sundays to the Back Street Meeting, where she and her sons attended. This vow, like many others, he had disregarded; but, hearing that there was to be a special preacher on Wednesday, November 29th, he 'was suddenly fixed in his mind to go.' The sores were worse than ever that evening. He found himself unable to keep up with his companions, and once or twice turned back. When at last he arrived at the meeting he climbed up into the gallery and sat down utterly exhausted. In spite of this, his companions noticed that he behaved more decently than usual and was very attentive to the prayer. But it was the sermon preached by Thomas Coles, the pastor of Needingworth, that moved him most of all. As if he divined Wright's malady, the minister took his text from one of our Lord's miraculous cures. He dwelt especially on faith as the one thing needful for the reception of the healing power. 'If the same degree of faith were exercised in our day,' he exclaimed, 'I doubt not but the like effects would be produced.' Whereupon Wright leapt to his feet and cried out, 'I believe, and I am cured body and soul.' It was true. The sores that had been so swollen had become mere scars. His pain and his lameness had left him. He went home, as his companions said, 'leaping and praising God and admiring His grace and goodness to him all the way; and so he continued almost all the night, adoring the grace and love of God to so vile a sinner. Nor was he troubled with the evil any more.' A full statement was written down at the time and signed by Sleep Dermer and Thomas Dermer, the sons of Mrs. Dermer, and Thomas Child and Joseph Morgan, two labourers on the farm: 'We whose names are hereunto subscribed do attest and

declare, that, living in the same family with David Wright, we were ear and eye witnesses of the truth of the foregoing particulars concerning him.' Edward Hitchin, a leading member of the meeting, compiled another account which was printed in Turner's *Remarkable Providences* and Aldridge's *Prevalency of Prayer* (587; 593). 'The change that is upon his soul,' observes Hitchin, 'is more remarkable than the cure of his body. To see such a sinful and grossly ignorant man so suddenly shine in grace, blessing and praising God, and he who knew nothing one hour to speak the next of Christ, was an astonishment to all who heard him' (586). Apparently Wright 'still remained in this admirable frame of heart.' 'He was so remarkable for his piety,' said Daniel Joyner, another member of the meeting, 'that people used to get round him in the chapel on a Sabbath-day on purpose to hear his conversation' (607. 448). He also mentions 'a kind of verse that was made on this great convert,' the divinity of which is good whatever may be thought of the poetry. Alluding to the time of Wright's going to hear Mr. Coles, and that of his return home, together with the change that had taken place in the interim, the lines run thus:—

'. . . . . David Wright
Went in the day and went in the dark;
He came back in the night
And came back in the light.'

When it was noised abroad how 'this poor, diseased, blasphemous wretch was become an eminent Christian,' people from near and far 'went into the field where he was used to tend sheep, in order to satisfy themselves respecting the truth of the report. Some gentry were known to go in their coaches, chiefly to gratify their curiosity concerning this man's bodily cure: but he always told them that he must begin with that of his soul, which was by far the greater; and then he would relate what a vile sinner he had been, and how great a change the grace of God had made in his heart and life.' Amongst those who went to converse with Wright, says Isaac James, was one Ralph Radcliffe, 'a sinful man and notorious for his profanity.' 'Are you the man that Coles converted?' asked this Hitchin squire. 'No,' replied Wright, 'Coles did not convert me; it was Jesus Christ that converted me, and if you, Sir, are not interested in him, you are in a sad case.' Upon which the Squire is said 'to have gone grumbling away' (607. 448).

V

It was no doubt the reputation won by Wright's miraculous healing which prompted the Back Street Independents to dignify themselves into a church. For some time past they had chafed at being a mere offshoot of the Hertford Church. Since 1691, when Hussey was called to the Presbyterian Church at Cambridge, they had been in difficulties about preachers. As they chose but rarely to 'sit down' with the brethren at Hertford, Haworth chose but rarely to 'sit down' with them. And extraordinary preachers were an extraordinary expense. They had a chapel; they had a following; the Holy Spirit had but recently descended in their midst. Why should they not separate themselves from Hertford and set up a church of their own? It was done accordingly.

In 1694, William Terry, formerly pastor at Hastings, became pastor of the Independent Church meeting in Back Street, Hitchin (632. 650). But it was not done with any 'eas or satisfaction'; for when they came to settle the covenant for the new Church it was found that the brethren held different views about the sacramental value and saving grace of infant baptism. A considerable minority, who preferred Haworth's teaching on this burning question, decided to remain in communion with the Hertford Church. Haworth himself declined to recognize those who had, as he phrased it, 'gone off with Mr. Terry.' To the consternation of this so-called pastor, Haworth became suddenly active in the Hitchin district, and 'brought off' several brothers and sisters who were still halting between the two opinions. One may read their names, their testimonies and their backslidings in the Hertford book, which was kept with little system by Haworth himself, but very efficiently by John Guyse, who succeeded him in 1705 (581). In that year there were as many as forty-seven members recorded from the Hitchin district; fifteen from Hitchin itself, eleven from Offley, five from Preston, four from Ippollitts, three from King's Walden, two from Ickleford, two from Baldock, two from Graveley, two from Cockernhoe, and one from Lilley. It is evident that Guyse was a most devoted pastor. With an affection that never flags he watches over each child of God committed to his charge from its cradle to its grave. Not even then does he forsake them. The memory of the just is not allowed to fail. Page by page in

the Church-book he describes in touching sentences the triumphant end of such as died in the Lord: 'enjoyed much sweet communion with Christ and a full assurance to the end'; 'dyed with strong faith and relyance'; 'dyed with great composure, faith, hope and patience'; 'dyed in holy resignation to the will of God'; 'dyed trusting in Christ and his promises.' Only once is he driven for truth's sake to write in another vein: 'she died,' he says of one member, 'under a cloud in her own soul.' In matters of discipline he was perhaps too lenient. Brother Greenhill, who had 'withdrawn himself for no other reason but because the Trustees had not provided him a seat to his mind,' was mildly besought to 'consider in his own soul the evil of such a spirit.' Brother Thorowgood, formerly a member of the Hitchin Baptist Church, who 'declared that he cannot have any further communion with the church because we have allowed a Presbyterian to have occasional communion with us,' was dismissed with a blessing unaccompanied by any admonition for lack of Christian charity. A sister, too recently married, being 'accused of an untimely child,' is prayed over with all tenderness and compassion as though an untoward accident had befallen her, and restored at the first moment to the bosom of the Church (581; 619).

On occasion, however, and especially where a group of members was concerned, Guyse could be firm enough. Here is his answer to those Hitchin members who were getting tired of trudging over to Hertford every Sunday and who felt that he should come to them: '1705. Agreed at a general church meeting held at Hertford on July 11 that our brethren in and about Hitchin shall not demand or insist that the pastor of this church shall at any time be obliged to go over to them either to preach or to administer the Lord's Supper among them, and that they shall as much as in them lies fill up their places in the seat of the church at Hertford till the Lord shall open up a way for them to go off from this body.' The next entry deals with the same subject but in stronger terms: 'Sept. 27, 1705. Agreed at a general meeting that we in and about Hertford (being the proper seat of the church) will by no means suffer ourselves to be entangled with the concerns of our brethren in and about Hitchin, but shall always act in reference to their affairs according to the best light it shall please the great Prophet of the church to give us; and if at any time our conduct in such actings should

The Reverend John Guyse D.D.

be attacked, and attempts thereon should be made to beget misunderstandings and controversies among us, we unanimously agree by the Grace of Christ to quench such motions in their first beginnings, looking upon them as a direct breach of the comfort, peace and good order of the church, and upon the persons that shall make them as contentious, and contrary to the primitive custom of the churches of God' (581).

The breach was still further widened in 1707, because the pastor, though he would not 'sit down' with the brethren at Hitchin, was resolved to sit in judgment on their private lives: 'Ordered that a letter be written to our brethren in and about Hitchin to require an account with proper evidence of the misdemeanours of several persons who do or have lived thereabouts, and are charged with disorderly walking, and furthermore to quicken them to their duty of coming to the ordinance and filling up their places amongst us.' Eventually some sort of evidence was procured, and the Hertford Church, carrying it with a high hand, 'excommunicated the six persons whose names and crimes are as followeth: John Edmunds for drunkenness and ill language; John Hawkins for basely abusing his wife by words and blows; Mary Gutteridge for fornication and other ill-carriage; Ann Phillar for forsaking public worship and for swearing; Richard Upton for privately stealing of wood; and Robert Patey for a notorious cheat in secretly going off with a considerable sum of money, defrauding his creditors, and deserting his wife and children' (ii).

This was followed up by a letter to the Hitchin brethren 'persuading them to, and proposing terms for, a union with the brethren that went off with Mr. Terry.' They were evidently weary of the Hertford and Hitchin connection, and wished to speed those who were neither pleased to stay nor willing to depart. The Hitchin Independents, however, were not to be hurried. They meant to propound their own terms and to do so at their own convenient season. It is not until 1715 that the

ii. It may be well to warn the reader in advance of the perhaps undue attention given to matters of discipline in this chapter. Let him not be deceived by this into a false idea of the Church life of the time. The historian is driven to use such materials as time has spared, and the Church-books of the Independents are almost solely concerned with outward, secular and sinful affairs. That which was extraordinary has been chronicled and handed down, whereas the ordinary work and worship of the Church, going on day by day and week by week, has not been recorded.

last word is said and these disunited brethren separate for ever: 'Our Brethren about Hitchin, having agreed with their brethren thereabouts to make up the breach that hath been long between them, we, the Church at Hertford, do hereby give our free and full consent to all the members of this Church that reside in and about Hitchin to unite with those other brethren, usually meeting in Back Street in Hitchin, into one Church' (581).

VI

In the Back Street Church, now happily at one, there had been many comings and goings of pastors during the twenty-one years, 1694–1715, of the great schism. Terry had 'gone-off' to Kettering in 1699. From 1700–1709 the Church was privileged to have as its pastor Thomas Scott, of whom Philip Doddridge said: 'I believe he was one of the holiest and most benevolent men on earth.' There is, alas! no account of his ministry here; nothing remains but these lines, composed as a memorial upon his death:—

> 'Wise without art and learned without pride;
> Not vain of knowledge, nor morose to hide,
> He lived for others; and his god-like mind
> Knew no ambition, but to bless mankind.
> Sweet was his nature; from his gentle tongue
> Persuasion flowed, and powerful was the song.
> Much of his praise this temple can attest,
> And Heaven hereafter will proclaim the rest.'

It should be added that he published several sermons, particularly one entitled 'An attempt to prove the Godhead of Christ, by settling the sense of a simple text, viz. *John* 20. 28: "And Thomas answered and said to him, 'My Lord and my God'"' (628. 36).

Following this eminent divine came Thomas Wright, 'a man,' declares Calamy, 'of extraordinary learning and ability, moderation and peacefullness' (606. 3. 148). The good that this worthy did is also interred with his bones. In the whimsical memory of Time only this anecdote remains: 'Wright was tall and handsome, and walked remarkably erect. As he went one day along the streets of London a man followed him very closely for a considerable distance. Suspecting some ill-design, Wright turned right about at last and asked him what he wanted.

" Nothing, sir," replied the stranger with the utmost readiness, " but that I might have it to say I trod in the steps of an upright man " ' (628. 38).

Wright himself trod in the steps of his holy and benevolent predecessor for four years, 1709–1713, and then handed over the pastorate to one Isaac Hoskins, whose preaching proved so attractive that his ' auditors ' were said to average as many as five hundred, and to be of such standing in the world that fifty amongst them were ' voters for the county.' It was Hoskins who reconciled the two parties in 1715 and brought them at last after many wanderings into one fold under one shepherd. By his advice the Church itself was reconstituted on the basis of an agreement set forth in a document which is the first entry in the Church-book (592. 1–2). ' On the 17 October 1715, the church of Christ meeting in Back Street Hitchin was constituted, both parties uniting in the following articles: 1. To forgive one another past miscarriages. 2. To covenant for themselves and children with the Lord and one another to unite together in the faith and order of the Gospel in the Congregational Way as the Lord shall enable them.' The third article, said to be ' briefly rendered,' but far too voluminous to quote, deals with the controversy still raging about Infant Baptism, their views on which, so they declare, had been seriously ' misrepresented to the Ministers of London.' In this article one can clearly trace the hand of Edward Hitchin, a leading member of the Church, who in 1706 had published a treatise on this very matter, much commended to the reader by Isaac Watts, *The Infants' Cause pleaded, cleared and vindicated, or the concurrent harmony of all parts of Holy Scripture, for the Covenant, Interest, Church Membership, and Baptism of the Infants of Believers* (589).

' We believe,' so they agree to say in this third article, ' we believe our Infant Seed to be within the Covenant of Grace on as good grounds as, according to a judgment of charity, we look upon Adult Believers or Professors to be, and therefore to have equally a right to Baptism as a seal and Token of the Covenant and not merely as a Sign of their Dedication to God by their parents, which without the Other we cannot but think to be a very slender ground for Baptism at all.' . . . At the same time, ' we detest that false aspersion that we believe our children shall be saved or that they may, when adults, claim their place at the Table of the Lord, though they live wickedly or walk disorderly.

We think it necessary in order to their being admitted to full Communion that the Church should be satisfied as to such further qualifications as the word of God requireth. . . . We would readily submit ourselves to further Light and Information in these things from better judgements; though at present we think, if most of these Principles cannot be maintained, we must give up the whole cause, and go over to the Tenets of our opponents in this, tho' in many other things agreable Friends, the Anti-paedo baptists ' (592. 2).

It is not clear whether Hoskins followed up his threat and ' gave up the whole cause,' but it is significant that he gave up the pastorate the following year. Perhaps the ' Ministers of London ' were offended at the Church's restatement of belief. In this respect, at any rate, Hoskins' successor, William Brown, did not offend. He was determined to write nothing down. The Church-book of his ministry is a blank. But needs be that offences come; and one learns from later sources that Brown, ' allowing himself to be overtaken with liquor,' sank by degrees from his high estate, first into the respectable but subservient status of a deacon, then into the condition of an ordinary member, and finally was cast out of the company of the Saints into the wilderness of this fallen world (592. 31–4). One would need to search far and wide in the annals of Nonconformity to find anything parallel to this. It was a tragic fall from grace; to the congregation all the more tragic because of the time their pastor took in falling. If only he had fallen headlong like Lucifer into the bottomless pit, they could have borne it. But for them as for him there was to be endured a long-drawn-out agony of suspense, as this craving, like some foul and insidious disease, drew its victim by slow degrees of degradation down to hell. On their side there were prayers and supplications, forgivenesses, remonstrances, denunciations; on his side, repentance, reform, relapse, evasive replies, energetic denials, the obstinate silence at length of one whose soul was extinguished. And then the last, sad scene: ' As your offence is of a Public Nature, and greatly aggravated, and highly reproachfull to our profession, and dishonourable to Christ, and oft admonished, we do proceed against you by the awful censure of excommunication as a means the Lord hath appointed for the salvation and recovery of Backsliding Sinners ' (592. 34).

For a time the Church struggled on without a pastor, afraid

to risk a repetition of what it had just been through. But in 1729, 'after long and earnest seeking to the Great Shepherd to send us one according to his own heart, the Lord Jesus Christ (in whose hands the care of the churches is) by his good providence sent Joseph Pitts amongst us' (592. 7). By that time the membership had dwindled to sixty-seven, and the worship and discipline of the Church were seriously impaired. 'It being found expedient, yea and necessary, to have some order and discipline amongst us, it was approved to concert some proper measures thereunto' (592. 8). 'To discharge the office of Deaconship,' two members were elected by ballot, one to represent the town, the other to represent the country members. New trustees were chosen for the chapel property. The Lord's Supper, so long and sadly neglected, was reinstituted: 'Agreed that the Lord's Supper be administered the first Lord's Day in the month, except in the Winter season, when the shortness of the days may make it necessary to administer it on that which falls convenient for the countrey-people, i.e. hath the most moonlight for them' (592. 11). The Church's general approval was given to the 'Resolutions of the Deputies appointed to protect the Civil Rights of the Protestant Dissenters' (iii); but so far as the repeal of the Test Acts was concerned it was agreed unanimously 'that an application to Parliament at the present time is very improper' (592. 16). The Deputies, however, would not listen to advice. At their instigation a repealing measure was brought in by Plumer, a member for this county, but was wrecked on Walpole's opposition. Another ninety-three years, 1828, were to elapse before this stigma was removed.

In the course of Pastor Pitts's ten years' ministry at Hitchin the number of his flock was almost trebled. One of them, James Belsham, was trained by him for the ministry, and became pastor of the Church at Bishop Stortford (592. 22). Another he trained to be a schoolmaster, and encouraged him to open a day-school in the vestry. But some of the brethren proved

iii. In November 1732, at a meeting held in Silver Street Chapel, London, it was resolved that every congregation of the three denominations of Protestant Dissenters, Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, in and within ten miles of London, should be recommended to appoint two deputies to be members of a society for the protection of the rights of Dissenters. This, as R. W. Dale has pointed out, was the first attempt of Nonconformity to combine for purposes of self-defence; it marks a distinct stage in the struggle for civil and religious liberty. See his *History of English Congregationalism*, p. 519.

quite intractable. First one and then another had to be cut off for 'their notoriously scandalous walk.' The most outrageous sinner of them all was Robert Berry, the Hitchin clockmaker, who 'spent his time endeavouring to lessen Mr. Pitts' ministerial character and hinder his usefulness.' At last Berry went so far as to say that the pastor 'told lies in the pulpit'; and then he went further still and made a maukin or image of Mr. Pitts and 'flung dirt and rotten eggs at it to beat it downe' (iv) (592. 17).

It is hardly surprising after this that Mr. Pitts felt obliged to look for ease and satisfaction elsewhere, and in 1738 'desired a Dismission to the Church at Braintree.' There is a sermon of his preached about this time on 'Faith the best preservative against Fainting,' which reflects something of his fortitude under these trials and detractions: 'Though friends should be displeased with us, grow cold and frown, Christ will smile upon us, and how little will their anger affect us then.' And again: 'Difficulties are what we are to expect in our Christian Race and Warfare, but we must determine, come what will, we will not desert our Colours, but remain true and faithful to our General' (597).

VII

James Webb, who followed Pitts, had originally been apprenticed to a weaver in Spitalfields, and, according to the rather condescending account of Samuel Wilson, 'was not distinguished by superior talents either in the pulpit or out of it. But he was a man of regular and uniform piety, and supported for a long series of years an irreproachable character. Although his sermons were not remarkably judicious, nor his style good, yet there was an unction attending his preaching which rendered it very acceptable to experiential Christians. He was deeply read in the old divines and imbibed much of their spirit and manner' (608). To this is mainly due the success of his ministry here of more than twenty years' duration. The old-fashioned hot-gospellers of Back Street liked his old-fashioned ways. They liked his thoroughgoing custom of calling himself a 'Protestant-Independent-Dissenter.' If he declaimed like a Boanerges in the pulpit, and thundered at them as from Mount

iv. Fortunately the clock which Berry had made for the Back Street Meeting was not cast out after him. It still ticks on to remind the brethren of one who was a good craftsman if not a good Christian.

Sinai; if in consequence the deacons had to spend money, as they did twice, 'for iron stanchions to the pulpit'; if he visited his people with his wrath and indignation and ruled them with a rod of iron—they liked him none the less. To those whose souls abhorred a smooth-tongued ministry, that seemed the authentic, apostolic spirit.

His first two ministerial acts were characteristic of the man. He appointed 'a time of fasting and prayer to humble our souls before the Lord on account of the present threatening state of both churches and nation,' and then he persuaded George Whitefield to come and preach to the heathen people of Hitchin (592. 28). It was expected that this renowned preacher would be allowed to use St. Mary's Church, for that was the only place of worship that could hold the crowd which would flock to hear him. But though Whitefield had been ordained priest that very year, the vicar, Mark Hildesley, refused the courtesy of his pulpit, and would not even let him preach in the churchyard. It was impossible, he said, to have this vulgar revivalist raving and ranting in his church. If he had driven fifteen of his hearers mad in the very first sermon that he preached, in this height of his powers he might drive the whole of Hitchin mad. Not to be outdone, Whitefield borrowed a table and stood up in the Market Place to speak. But there again he was checked, for some fellows of the baser sort got into the Tower and so jangled the bells that, in spite of his stentorian voice, not a syllable was heard. It was an old trick, and one that had been tried on Wesley, too. 'The Devil,' wrote that divine in his *Journal* on May 13, 1740, 'knew his kingdom shook, and therefore stirred up his servants to ring bells and make all the noise they could, but my voice prevailed.' Whitefield, instead of protesting, took up his table and walked. 'We removed,' he says, 'into a more commodious place in the fields, but being fatigued with the ride, and the sun beating most intensely upon my head, I was obliged in a short time to break off, being exceeding sick and weak. A kind gentlewoman offered me her house, where I went in and lay down for about two hours, and then came and preached near the same place, and God was with us. It was pleasing to see how the hearts of the people were knit to me' (594).

Wherever Whitefield sowed the seed of the Word there sprang up instantly a hundredfold of people possessed with the

idea of becoming famous preachers too. However stony their ground, however bare their abilities might be, God would provide. For more than a twelvemonth after Whitefield's visit the pastor of Back Street Meeting was busy suppressing those forward and independent spirits who, in chapel and out of chapel, kept breaking out into unlicensed and unbridled exhortations. Some he dismissed to the Church in Fetter Lane, then in charge of the Rev. Edward Hitchin, formerly their fellow-member, who held broader views than Webb on 'liberty of prophesying.' Others he reduced to silence by the discipline of the church at home. One of them, it seems, had gained such a repute that 'the church at Thatcher requested that he may assist them by preaching or expounding among them.' This request being considered in the Church meeting, it was resolved 'that Mr. Webb have some conversation with Bro. Impey on the affair, as to his furniture and ability for so great a work' (592. 30). As a result of the conversation, Impey was 'appointed to give a specimen of his Ministeriall Furniture before the church,' and a text calculated to lower him in his self-esteem was chosen for him in advance: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' Apparently Impey's expounding was not approved, for soon afterwards he begged to be dismissed to the Church at Datchworth, eight miles distant; 'this is complied to,' records the Church-book, 'without inquireing into reasons' (592. 31). After that there was no further trouble with 'upstart and self-created preachers.'

VIII

But pastors are preordained to trouble, and Webb was no exception. At one time, when he was laid aside by sickness, there was so much to do in the way of discipline that the brethren met without him and proposed 'to have some persons chose unto the office of Eldership for the Service of the Church.' It was 'carried *nem. con.*, and a day of prayer appointed for the Thursday following.' But Webb, when he heard of it, would not hear of it. It was an encroachment on his jurisdiction: 'The consideration of Elders waved, *Not* with Brother Webb's Inclination' (592. 29). Certainly he was competent enough to look after his flock. The least slip and he was down upon them.

The REVEREND Mr EDWARD HITCHIN, B D

And sometimes, acting on mere hearsay, he was upon them for no slip at all. Sister Bray, for example, who was accused of 'encouraging persons of ill fame,' replied that she 'wondered that people could be so foolish as to believe reports.' After more careful inquiry, it appeared 'there was no foundation for the report and it seemed Injustice and Cruelty' (592. 41, 53).

In the same way, when they rushed in to charge Thomas Nichols with 'public drunkenness,' it was found he had a substantial if not a complete defence: 'He declaired that he was wearied having been a long journey, that he did drink about three half pints of ail, that being wet he stayed to warm and dry him-self, and that he was in no ways insensible, that the ridiculous part of the charge of flinging his hat in the Fire was altogether untrue, that he is very thankfull to the Church for their care and kindness, and hopes that the Lord will make it of use to him, having laid with much weight on his mind, and that thro' Grace he shall be preserved from dishonouring the Church.' The Church 'declared their satisfaction therewith' (592. 42).

Amongst those cases that were brought home there is one against Widow Langford for 'conforming to the Established Worship.' She protested that she went to St. Mary's only once in a while, but the Church decided 'to await the Sincerity of her acknowledgment, and promise of future Dilligence' (592. 33). There is another against Sister Nash which is not specified, but evidently it 'laid with much weight' upon her mind: 'Reported that Sister Nash was under great dejection and feared to come to the Ordinance unworthily, but after some conversation she was helped to come to it, saying if she perished it should be waiting on the Lord' (592. 39). Brother John Kimpton was admonished for 'Shuffling Untruth in his business and thereby Scandalizing his profession' (592. 46); Brother George Cook 'for breaking to the injury of his creditors and thereby giving occasion to reproach the ways of the Lord.' 'He must own,' he said, 'that he was guilty. As to the things of the World, he hoped thro' Grace, they did not much concern him, but the dishonour he had brought to Christ was grievous to him. The Lord, however, had enabled him to look to the pretious blood of sprinkling.' It was agreed by the Church that 'the profession he hath now made of his repentance be in charity judged sincere' (592. 45).

In the last case we shall cite there is no sign of repentance. On acount of his 'illicit drunkenness, swearing, slight of the church, and a disregard of their tenderness, care and indeavour to reclaim after long waiting and frequent admonitions,' William Thompson was declared 'to be no longer a member of the Church of Christ' (592. 45).

Throughout Webb's pastorate the Church-book seems more a calendar of misdemeanours than a register of Church affairs. But at times the horizon widens. On June 18, 1746, for example, two months after the massacre of Culloden Moor, a day was 'set apart for thanks to the Lord on account of his great goodness to the nation, especially in the great victory obtained over the rebells' (592. 43). They had no illusions about what would happen if ever the Stuarts came into their own again. On December 8, 1755, 'some time was spent in prayer relative to the awfull appearance of God in the Dreadful Earthquake on the 1st Nov. at Lisbon; as also to the critical junctore of affairs in the Nation, to humble ourselves before the Lord, and to seek his Gracious Presence and Protection of us, and our defence and success against our enemies' (592. 55).

IX

In 1759 Webb received a call to the Church at Fetter Lane, and handed over the Hitchin pastorate to Edward Hickman, who had just been displaced to make room for him. It appears that Hickman, after serving as assistant to Richard Rawlin of Fetter Lane for six years, had expected the pastorate when Rawlin died. But the Church declined to give him a call, and, 'a warm dispute ensuing, he was dismissed' (608). In a fit of righteous indignation he shook the dust of that ungrateful city from off his feet, and looked for fairer treatment in the country. At Hitchin, in the Church of the man who had supplanted him, his ministry was warmly approved, especially by the poorer members of the congregation. In his rather censorious manner, Samuel Wilson allows him to have possessed 'but slender talents'; and adds that 'he was not remarkably judicious.' 'But,' he continues, 'his preaching was esteemed savoury and met with acceptance from plain, serious Christians' (608). He was even more successful as a pedagogue than as a preacher, for side by side with his pastoral work he carried on a grammar-

school in Bancroft, which added to its numbers almost daily such as should be saved from ignorance and sloth.

It was undoubtedly his fondness for little boys which beguiled him into the unwisdom of admitting a lad of only fourteen years as a member of the Church (592. 65). It is true that the boy handed in a written testimony of his belief and seemed to promise well. But then, as one of the deacons pointed out, most children seem to promise well. Before he was sixteen Thomas Beech had so frequently offended as to be excommunicated and cut off from the Church, and the deacon was enabled to say to the disillusioned pastor, 'I told you so.' 'It is advisable,' the Church afterwards agreed, 'to defer these premature admissions, so that youths might have an opportunity of growing in Knowledge and steadiness of Temper and Disposition' (592. 93).

There was only one other difference between Hickman and his people, but it was grave enough to part them. It was in 1771, a year when the smallpox raged. They were burying townsmen that summer by the score, and throughout the county also, insomuch that Dimsdale, the famous inoculator, opened an 'inoculating house' at Hertford under his own supervision. Foreseeing what was going to happen, Hickman warned his people that 'inoculation was a kind of presuming upon Providence,' and that he should refuse to pray for anyone who had recourse to it (632. 650). In terror for their lives, the richer brethren resolved to trust to the practice of a clever Quaker inoculator rather than to the preaching of their solid Independent pastor. They remembered that his wife had died of the smallpox, in spite of all his prayers, only two years before (v). They made the journey to Hertford and were saved. The poorer members, who could not afford to go to Hertford, had perforce to stay at home and trust in Providence, and several of them died. Unfortunately for Hickman, it was the richer sort he had to look to for his stipend, and they were not minded to pay for a minister who would not pray for them. There was nothing

v. The Quaker John Woolman, it may be remembered, shared the feelings of those ministers of the period who preached against inoculation as an interference with the designs of the Most High. He looked upon smallpox as 'a Messenger of the Almighty to be an assistant in the cause of virtue.' And he also died of it.

On the other hand, one should not forget the many who died of the inoculation itself in the early days. On March 10, 1775, for example, Phoebe Sharples of Hitchin 'died of the smallpox by inoculation.' And one could cite many other victims.

for it, therefore, but to shut down his school and look for better treatment in another part of the country.

It is evident that Hickman loved this little town and was very loath to go. Three or four times a year he would come back from Kimbolton and preach to the good people of Hitchin, not in the Back Street Meeting, however, but in the Baptist Chapel. On these occasions the poorer members of his old Church would forsake all and flock to hear him. In the end, after looking for better treatment in four more Churches, he did come back to his first meeting-house at Hitchin, but only to be buried. 'In memory,' says the epitaph, pathetically penned by his son-in-law, the Rev. William Parry, and which looked down upon those who had once ill-used him with a dignified rebuke, 'In memory of the Rev. Edward Hickman, a faithful Minister of Christ, who was in his Doctrine sound, in his preaching affectionate, in his Disposition humble, in his carriage peaceable. After passing a life of fifty-one years in this world of vexation and sin, his soul (refined by Grace) received her long-desired dismission to the eternal world of happiness and joy on the 31st day of August 1781. His venerable remains, waiting for a glorious Resurrection, are here deposited in the peaceful mansion of the Grave, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest' (608. 3. 460).

X

Soon after Hickman resigned the pastorate in 1771 a 'very unanimous invitation' was sent to John Griffiths of Hinckley in Leicestershire 'to come to us on Approbation.' For one month he 'officiated amongst us in an acceptable manner'; for another month, having received a call to the pastoral office, he 'spread it before the Lord in order to determine wisely,' and at last, 'being fully convinced by many weighty reasons that it was incumbent to move to Hitchin,' he was solemnly 'set apart,' the service being opened by 'a very suitable and Pathetic Introduction,' and followed by 'a very excellent and suitable sermon from *Acts* 20: 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"' (592. 75, 76).

Griffiths was 'an exemplary pious man,' but he had less reward of his labours than many who have been less devoted. He was constantly wrestling with God in private supplication, constantly 'spending many hours together in prayer with my friend, Mr. John Geard, pastor of Tilehouse Street,' constantly summoning 'extraordinary meetings of prayer of both churches with a particular view to seek the Lord for the Revival of Religion amongst us.' But their words seemed to return unto them void. He obeyed to the full the injunction to 'feed my lambs.' 'Our hearers were not numerous but appeared to be very serious, solid and attentive.' But throughout that time of dearth he seemed unable to add to the number of his flock. During his twenty-two years' ministry there are only thirty admissions (592. 69). It is touching to see how he rejoices over one sinner that repenteth, over one member the more. 'He gives very good evidence of being a Gracious man,' he writes of William Langford, who was admitted in 1782 (592. 83). In that he was not mistaken. Against Langford's name is this note in the hand of a subsequent pastor: 'Died after being 46 years a holy and excellent member.'

'A modest, meek, humble and serious young man,' he certifies of William Newman, who was added in 1784, 'and the Church considered his experience not only satisfactory but sensible. N.B. Blessed be God for this fresh instance of his favour to us as a Church in the Conversion of one soul after a long Night of Darkness and Formality' (592. 84). 'May they prove additional blessings to us,' he prayerfully exclaims of Mr. and Mrs. Morell, who were received by dismission from Malden in 1786 (592. 85). Four years later he observes: 'I bless God they and their family *have* proved great Blessings to us. I record it to the glory of God.' 'Blessed be God,' he breaks out once more in 1789, on the recovery of Ann Watts, 'for this instance of Sovreign Grace after a long interval of Formality and Carnal Security. The Lord grant that this may be a prelude to many more' (592. 87). He is not for turning anyone away who possesses the least spark of grace. '1777. James Cooper was admitted a member of the church. Our brothers Wilshere and Field, who conversed with him, were satisfied of his being a gracious man, but observed that he was rather deficient in knowledge. The Lord increase his faith and knowledge, too' (592. 81). Hardly any questions were asked of those occasional communicants

who honoured the Church by wishing 'to sit down with us, whilst Providence continues them in Hitchin.'

A special feature of Griffiths's ministry is the institution of half-yearly gatherings at seed-time and harvest of both the Independent and Baptist Churches. 'It is a pleasant sight,' says Griffiths, 'to see the two churches so peaceable and friendly under one roof, keeping a day to the Lord.' For the main part they were occupied with prayer or thanksgiving or humiliation on account of the crops, for a large proportion of both congregations still consisted of country people whose living depended upon agriculture: '1789 July 23. An Extraordinary Meeting of prayer of both churches was held at Back Street Meeting on account of the rainy weather, which had continued about five weeks, and look'd very gloomy upon our harvest.' 'Oct. 22. To return God thanks for the Good Harvest he sent us. N.B. Intemperance severely reproved.' '1792. To return thanks for the Harvest, which was intermixed with mercy and judgement. The wheat was secured in a very good state. The latter part discovered rather a judicial aspect as the barley and oats suffered. Here may we learn and see our sins in our Punishment' (592. 86. 90).

But sometimes the brethren were united in prayer on national and international affairs, e.g. in 1788, when the repeal of the Test Acts was once again 'spread before the Lord,' and in the general terror of the French Revolution in 1791, when thanksgiving was made to God 'for his abundant mercies to *us* both spiritual and temporal, and to supplicate the Divine Throne for a blessing upon our ministrations, that precious souls may be converted, and *Peace* and *Harmony* continue.' The anxiety of the nation is still more manifest in 1793, when Pastor Griffiths 'reminded us of the mildness of last winter, which afforded plenty of provision both for man and beast.' But he also reminded them that, by reason 'of the present stagnation of Trade, the labouring poor are likely to become a very heavy expense to the Nation, as we are informed that at Birmingham and Manchester the Manufacturers turn off fifty or a hundred at a time. Also the present war against France, in conjunction with Holland, Prussia and Austria, is likely to prove a great calamity to the Nation and a source of unknown Evils.' This sermon was followed up the next year by one from Pastor Geard, who in his 'prefatory observations' speaks in melancholy terms

' of the war now carrying on in France and of the Yellow Fever so fatal at Philadelphia and some parts of the West Indies.' But in spite of all he ' can assure the Godly of the Safety of the Church, as in the hands of Christ, and of the preservation of Religion under all National Desolations ' (592. 91–2).

XI

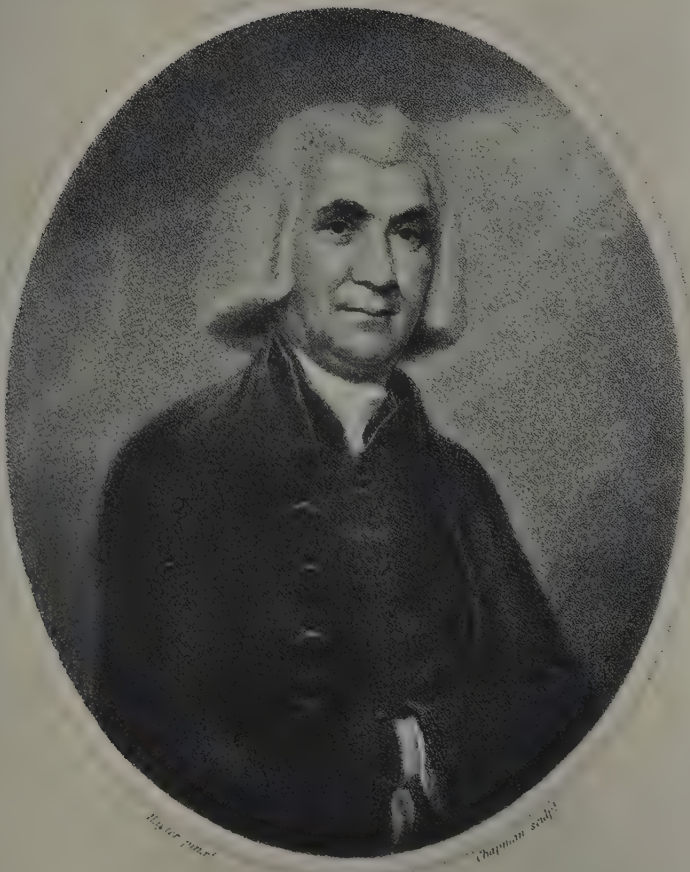
In matters of discipline, Griffiths was generous to a fault. ' We humbly hope,' he says in his mild, subjunctive way, ' that Discipline may be blessed as well as Doctrine, and that we may be able to maintain it for the honour of Christ and the benefit of his Church.' It cut him to the heart to cut off any member. He would always discover and give the benefit of the doubt where his deacons could see no doubt at all. He worked and prayed without ceasing to upraise those who fell, to restore such as were ' excluded.' Of one sinner he writes, ' The Lord restore this wandering sheep '; of another, ' We add our earnest prayers to the great Head of the Church to reclaim this Delinquent and restore him again to us as another prodigal to his father.' The besetting sin of the Church in this period was what the pastor termed intemperance, and the deacons in plainer terms called drunkenness. One after another was cast out for this cause. Here is a typical entry: ' 1774. Our brethren William Wilshere and Thomas Baldock having spoken to John Froy, found him remarkably stupid and unaffected with his case. . . . He owned himself guilty of immoderate drinking, but he rather palliated by saying he did not go to the ail-house for it, nor did he seem to discover any contrition or brokennesse of heart, and sent no message to the church. It was agreed to let it rest some time and see how he would behave ' (592. 78). A few months later he was ' excluded for Intemperance,' having been repeatedly admonished by the Church. The women were not as bad as the men in this respect, but charges against them are not infrequent, e.g. ' 1775. Elizabeth Arnold was desired to keep from the Lord's Table on account of a report which was circulated that she was seen in liquor the Lord's Day after our last Sacrament Day ' (592. 79).

Amongst the miscellaneous cases of discipline, we may notice that of Joseph Maulden, who in 1777 was charged with ' indolent behaviour; his wife, himself and his family Half-Starving, and

he will not seek for work, nor put himself forward to do something.' 'In his own defence,' as the pastor is quick to point out, 'he pleaded that there was no work to be got' (592. 81). There is also the sad case of James Cooper, that member who, as already stated, had been found 'Gracious but rather deficient in Knowledge.' The year after his admission he scandalized the Church by 'listing as a soldier twice, and that on the Lord's day.' It was agreed to suspend him 'until he discovered a proper spirit of Repentance and Humiliation.' But he continued 'to walk as disorderly' as ever. Not only 'did he discover no repentance for his past Misconduct, but added to his former crimes neglect in his family, indolence in his business, and enlisted a third time.' It was finally and unanimously agreed 'to exclude him from our Communion as a disgraceful and unworthy member of a Christian Society' (592. 82). It was such sorrowful lapses as these which moved the pastor to count up and magnify his few blessings and copy them into the book. For example, what a comfort by way of contrast was his choir, a body of men and women generally found so touchy and unharmonious and hard to please. Behold their sweet reasonableness in that year 1789, when the spirit of unreason was abroad: 'Dec. 13th. This day our Singers, which are very numerous, removed from the side to the Front Gallery with great Unanimity and Approbation. N.B. I enter this Article as a proof to Posterity of the peaceable Disposition of our Congregation' (592. 87).

It remains to add that this pastor was a methodical keeper of the Church-book and a collector of other books that might increase the faith and knowledge of his simple-minded people. They are still to be seen in the Church's library, perhaps more easily seen than read. But to glance over the titles only is an illumination, and calls up the very image of their 'solid and attentive' readers: Alleines's *An Alarm to the Unconverted*, Winslow's *Midnight Harmonies*, *The Footprints of Popery*, Deck's *Joy in Departing*, *Half-hours with Old Humphrey*, Hall's *Christian Philosopher triumphing over Death* (624).

In 1793 Pastor Griffiths had need himself of this last book, for he sustained a heavy trial in the death of his son, 'an amiable youth,' it was said, 'of whom there was hope that he died in the Lord' (604). The shock of this bereavement proved too great to bear; his mental faculties failed, and after languishing



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Rev. William Gordon D.D.

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two years he died, the first pastor of this Church to die among his people. It would have been fitting to have inscribed upon his stone those words which in 1780 he had written in his native Welsh tongue in the Church-book: 'Hyd yn hyn trwy Râs—Gogoniant y Ddun—So far through Grace—Glory be to God' (592. 83).

XII

After the iron discipline of Pastor Webb the Church had found the yoke of this Welshman easy. They were disposed to try another of his race, and found an unmistakable specimen in a student fresh from Homerton College, the Rev. William Williams. Amongst those present at his ordination at Hitchin in 1795 were the Rev. John Jennings, the author of two excellent works on *Preaching Christ* and *Experimental Preaching*, who preached a sermon on *The Nature of Dissenting Churches*, and that remarkable man and 'fire-hot bigot,' as he had been called, the Rev. William Gordon, D.D. (605). Born at Hitchin and baptized at the Back Street Meeting in 1728, Gordon had grown up to be an Independent minister. But, being unable to endure the theology of his brethren or tolerate the treatment of the United Colonies, he espoused the American cause, emigrated, and became pastor of a church at Roxbury, Massachusetts. Being unable to endure that either, he became chaplain of the Provincial Congress, and being unable to endure that, he sank into secular life. By a piece of good fortune he obtained the post of private secretary to General Washington, whom he served in that capacity for several years. It was this association which gave him a first-hand knowledge of events and an access to the archives of State, enabling him to complete a history in four volumes of *The Rise, Progress and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America*, which he published on his return to England in 1788. For a time he existed on the £300 which he received from its subscribers, and when that was exhausted he accepted the pastorate of the church at St. Neots, and when at last its members were unable to endure him he cast himself upon his friends, dying in fame and reputation a doctor of divinity, but in worldly goods a pauper (609; 633).

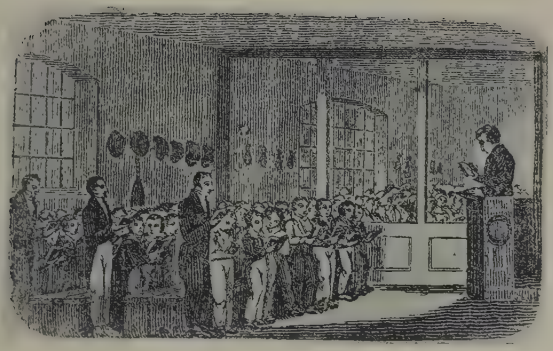
William Williams, to whom Gordon had given the pastoral blessing upon his ordination, was no doctor of divinity, but none the less a good, sound, working divine. There was no

question of 'enduring him'; he was beloved by everyone. 'Considering,' he says, 'how liable to unholy jealousy the human mind is, I record it to the honour of divine grace that the worthy pastor of the Baptist Church, the Rev. John Geard, and myself lived on terms of strict friendship during the whole of my ministry at Hitchin. May we meet at last in those happy realms where peace distills like morning dew, and all the air is love' (592. 99). If one is to judge his ministry of seventeen years by the number of members he received, he was hardly more successful than Pastor Griffiths. The lean years had not yet passed. But, as the Church-book notes, his forty-four converts 'belonged, most of them, to what are called the respectable circles of society,' and brought the Back Street Meeting into high repute (628. 13). It was amongst the women and children that his influence was most marked: '1800. Mrs. Martha Wolf was received into full communion; a small degree of encouragement after a long silence. This admission was very acceptable to us all.' '1807. Miss Sarah Tapp and Mr. George Brown were admitted into the fellowship of the church. We all felt peculiar pleasure in the accounts these young persons gave of the Lord's dealings with their souls. O Lord, repeat such instances of kindness to thy church, build up Zion and appear in thy Glory' (592. 104, 107).

By the endeavours of the pastor's wife, a Female Friendly Society was established in 1803, and a Sunday School the same year for boys and girls, though Miss Wilshere and her brother afterwards claimed 'to have done something of this kind in a cottage previous to this date' (vi) (628. 13). In the first month as many as seventy scholars were enrolled. It was due to her perseverance also that the women, who now began to outnumber the men, were for the first time given a vote, if not a voice, in the government of the Church: '1811. Our brother John Tapp having been previously chosen by the church to the office of a deacon was solemnly set apart to his office. N.B. At his election the sisters voted but did not speak; those who had anything to communicate mentioned it to one of the brethren, who made it known to the church' (592. 107).

The cases of discipline in Williams's ministry are few. Evi-

vi. In the private account books of William Lucas, a friend of the Wilsheres, there is this entry under 1787: 'Pd. towards an Establishment of those called Sunday Schools in this town, £5 5s.'



BACK STREET SUNDAY SCHOOL, 1803

dently the members who had been drawn from ' the respectable circles of society ' were exerting an influence for good. Not until 1802 is there anything to record: ' James Arnold having absented himself for about fifteen months, attending at the place called The Moorhens (vii), the brethren Langford and Tapp were sent to know the state of his mind, and to exhort him to fill up his place; but he declared that he neither intended nor wished to join us in church fellowship.' On this, Pastor Williams notes: ' 'Tis now seven years within about a month since I first came to Hitchin, and this was the first occasion we have to notice the conduct of an erring brother. Lord grant it may be the last ' (592. 105). Other transgressions ensued, but Pastor Williams in his charitable way disguises the worst of them in cypher, not wishing to pander to the curiosity of times to come (592. 99).

In the same way he would not allow one member to rake up the past of another member before the face of the congregation, or publicly challenge the character of any who applied for membership. In 1794 there had been a most unfortunate scene in the chapel, for, whilst William Tansley was delivering the spiritual experience or testimony that was required of all those who sought admission, he was brought to a full-stop by one of the brethren, who suddenly and passionately wanted to know why, if Tansley was really such a perfect man, his wife was found to be with child by him before their marriage (592. 93). For the future, said Pastor Williams, he would have no scandal of this kind. The public testimonies gave place to written testimonies, and it was not many years before these in their turn gave place to private inquiries by the deacons and spiritual examination by the pastor. If there were to be any adverse comments on past conduct, they should be uttered in the discreet manner which ministers know how to use, e.g. on the admission of that erstwhile sinner Samuel Impey in 1808, when Williams notes in the book: ' Is he not a brand plucked out of the burning? ' (592. 107).

In the year 1812 Williams was afflicted by a paralytic stroke which took away the use of his limbs. The infirmity obliged

vii. A public-house. This is the only lapse into facetiousness to be found in the Church-book. Dr. Peel, however, more fair and charitable than the author, notes upon this note: ' I do not incline to think the entry is facetious. There may have been another dissenting congregation meeting at that period at The Moorhens.'

him to resign, though his will and his devotion were such that each Sunday he had himself carried to the chapel to hear his successor preach. Each week-day he toiled on at that Hymn Book which he was determined to complete: *A Selection of Hymns from the best Authors, including a number of originals* (613). This compilation, which was not printed till after his death, does not appear to have been well received. His own originals are so long that one would think the singers were already in Eternity and knew what endless time they had before them. But their maker *was* upon the verge of Eternity. Before they went out into this world he had departed for the next, to be numbered amongst those ' hundred and forty and four thousand who are redeemed from the earth, and who sing as it were a new song before the throne of God ' (611; 623).

XIII

The Rev. Charles Sloper, who had been called to the pastorate on Williams's resignation, is said to have been ' caustic and personal in his preaching, high in sentiment, and a little imperious ' (628. 14). At the outset he ruffled those members whom Williams had brought in from the ' respectable circles of society ' by remarking on the irregularity of their attendance. Whatever Williams may have said, he was not going to have a privileged class of members who sauntered in occasionally, and then late, of a Sunday morning, or who condescended to come to the Lord's Table once a quarter. He accordingly decreed (1) ' that, if any member be absent from the Lord's Table, an inquiry shall be made, and, if absent two succeeding ordinance days without being able to assign a satisfactory reason, the same shall be laid before the Church at their next meeting,' and (2) ' that, if any person, having it in their power to attend the regular ordinances of religion, shall be found to neglect the same, and only appear at the Lord's Table with a view of retaining their membership, such conduct shall be deemed unworthy, and subject to such censure as the church may judge fit to adopt ' (592. 109). He then proceeded to ruffle the ' respectables ' still further by advancing Samuel Impey, that ' brand plucked out of the burning,' to be deacon, and finally estranged them by marrying a domestic servant in the family

of Brother Brown. That was the last straw. One by one the ladies of the Female Friendly Society took up their hassocks and their hymn-books and departed in a huff. Mrs. Frances Mary Baron of Maydencroft 'sent a message requesting to be no longer a member of Back Street Meeting (such were her words).' She was dismissed with this Parthian shot: 'We hope you will now very seriously consider whether in what you have done you stand approved before Him to whom we are all accountable, and that you will labour to honour Him and to be found in peace at the hour of death, and the great day of judgment' (592. 108). The late pastor's wife took herself and her children off to Tylers Street Chapel. Two of the deacons followed. Some are marked off as 'Gone to Americay,' and some as 'Gone to St. Mary's' (viii) (592. 112–14).

Once the irreconcilables were gone Sloper set to work with renewed vigour to fill up the vacant places. His preaching, always described as 'powerful,' compelled not the rich from their respectable homes, but the common folk out of the highways and hedges to come in. As many as eighty-four were 'received.' Not satisfied with his labours in Hitchin, Sloper went out into the country places, too, and preached the gospel to the poor. He even obtained a hearing for the Word at Shillington, where previous to his day there had been great and violent opposition (628. 14). At a farm known as Trunks House, close to the ruins of Minsden Chapel, he converted a barn into a meeting-place, and, after preaching in it himself several months, persuaded Thomas Oxenham, pastor of the Welwyn Independent Chapel, to set up an evening lecture on the Lord's Day (639). 'Even here,' says Oxenham, in a book entitled *The Riches of Free Grace*, 'the persecutor appeared in the shape of a farmer who threatened to play *God Save the King* upon the flute the moment the sermon should begin. But he was so impressed by the opening words of the discourse that, when his coat was pulled as a signal to start his tune, he had no power to move.' He was afterwards converted and 'has often assisted in carrying

viii. It was quite rare for an Independent to desert to the Established Church; and there is reason to think that those who did so were not all moved by spiritual motives. It is recorded of one brother that, having been reproved by his pastor for irregular conduct, he was not seen at chapel again. At last the Minister chanced upon him in the street, and gently inquired why he had given up coming to service. 'I'm finished with religion,' he replied, 'I'm going to join the Church.'

on the service at Hitchin by raising the tunes for us ' with the same converted flute (615).

So far, Sloper's ministry had been one continual battle, but there was worse to come. Open enemies he could deal with, and, fighting a good fight, could exult over their discomfiture. But now his own familiar friends, the deacons, turned against him. One after another, and in spite of his powerful preaching, they became infected with Socinianism (ix), and not only indulged for themselves but secretly spread amongst others ' heretical notions concerning the Spirit.' As Sloper well knew, the cause of the trouble was not far to seek. Not long before he was appointed—in 1799—an Academy for the training of Independent ministers had been founded at Wymondley, three miles distant from Hitchin (632. 633). The students had been placed under the rule of the Rev. William Parry, son-in-law of Edward Hickman, the former pastor of the Back Street Meeting, but as he was no disciplinarian they did very much as they liked. Some got into difficulties about money, and others got into difficulties about morals; but, what was worst of all, the taint of Socinianism pervaded the whole place, insomuch that its students were ' dreaded by most of the congregations to whom they were sent.' Unfortunately some of the students, for the better understanding of the ways of Church life, had got themselves admitted as members of the Back Street Meeting, and so the poison spread. Whilst Sloper reclaimed the heathen in the hamlets around Hitchin, they perverted the souls of his faithful people at home.

After much prayer and pondering Sloper decided to make an example of their chief proselyte, who was his deacon, Dr. Watson Perks. At a Church meeting held in 1822 he was accordingly ' dismissed from his office, his sentiments having been for a considerable time contrary to the faith, and his conduct so opposite to the comfort of the Pastor, and the peace of Society, that it became impossible to exercise any longer forbearance towards him ' (592. 120). Thereupon Perks ' voluntarily terminated all other relationship by declaring that it gave him the

ix. This heresy can be studied in Dr. Hastings's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. xi, pp. 650–654. Dr. South used to dismiss the Socinians more summarily as ' impious blasphemers, whose infamous pedigree runs back from wretch to wretch in a direct line to the Devil himself, and who are fitter to be crushed by the civil magistrate as destructive to government and society than confuted as merely heretics in religion.'

greatest satisfaction to dissolve all connection with the pastor and the church.' The other heretics were not cast out but suspended. Here is their sentence in the Church-book: 'When on a former occasion the Church met respecting certain errors in doctrine which were propagating by some of her members, an accommodation took place with a positive understanding and resolution that if the parties then accused should at any future time offend in like manner they should be suspended. Independent of such resolution we have sufficient reasons now to come to a decision, and we consider that purity of doctrine and the Church's peace and reputation demand of us immediate and decisive attention to the advice of the New Testament, especially that contained in *Romans* 16. 17: "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." We therefore resolve that William Foster, James Baker and Daniel Rudd be suspended from the communion, until the Church shall be fully satisfied that they embrace her doctrines, and are every way prepared to seek her peace and prosperity. And we resolve that henceforward similar proceedings shall be instituted against any member who shall in like manner offend against the faith and comfort of the Church; and also that this resolution be fully stated to every future candidate for membership' (592. 121).

This is signed by Charles Sloper as pastor, and by forty-two of those members in whom no offence had been found. Of those 'setters forth of strange doctrine' who had been suspended, Foster soon followed his fellow deacon Perks and the other irreconcilables and respectables to the Tylers Street Chapel. Baker and Rudd joined the Quakers. Of those who, without being suspended, were under a cloud of suspicion, Thomas Ward went off to the Wesleyans. For the Independents, he had built the wall at the top of their burial-ground. For the Methodists he did more: he built them a chapel. As for Sloper, he had kept the faith, he had built a wall of salvation round the small remnant of his people. But his warfare was accomplished, and his imperious spirit was spent. He died, says the Church-book, 'of a broken heart' (628. 14).

XIV

Even if there were space, it would not be possible to multiply words over the pastors who have followed Sloper. The first

volume of the Church-book, which ends with his ministry, is intimate and all-embracing. There is nothing hid from the sight of God or man. But the later volumes have suffered from suppression; compared with the first they are meagre, discreet and dull. There are things in them, however, which it is meet

THE REV. WILLIAM WAYNE

and right to record. There is, for example, the successful ministry of William Wayne, 1825–1845 (x), who added as many

x. Francis Lucas gives an account of him: 'A short stout man with high shoulders; of a thick complexion and very fond of smoking. He had a considerable readiness and command of language and was often employed on deputation business by the Bible Society. He lived in what is called the Rectory, just outside the south gate of the Churchyard. Left a large family' (966. 188).

as 194 members to the Church—some of them, it may be noted, being received from the Wymondley Academy, which, having rallied under the administration of the Rev. Thomas Morell (whose parents were members of the Back Street Meeting), finally broke up in 1832 (620).

There is the gradual decay of the fabric; the provision of 'staunchions and seports' to keep the rickety building from falling; the reward in legs of mutton and gallons of beer, and a ride in Kershaw's Coach, for the bricklayers and carpenters when the job was done (583. 12–15). In the artless rhymes of William Carter, who worshipped in it as a boy, there is a description of the Old Meeting House and its services which may be interpolated here:—

'Far back from the street stood the Meeting House old,
Where garden and fence did its entrance enfold,
A square, massive building with well-buttressed walls,
With a double-spanned roof to resist the rainfalls.
On its southerly side was the graveyard—so dear,
Where on Sundays were gathered from far and from near
An assemblage of people who lingered and gazed
On the moss-covered tombstones their forefathers raised.
But let me but faintly attempt to describe
The old Meeting House as seen from inside,
With its high wooden pews, where, lost to sight
Of parson and people you could slumber outright,
And in snug little corners, where quality sat,
They could, if they chose, even quietly chat,
For a curtain of baize would shut them quite in,
And like to a cloak would cover their sin.
Tall pillars supported the roof, that was high,
The pulpit, 'twixt windows that looked on the sky,
Was fixed to the wall up a long winding stair,
Which needed a climb ere you found yourself there.
And just at its front was the table-pew found,
Allotted to elderly men who sat round
A table on which, as their elbows they placed,
With earnest attention the preacher they faced.
To add to its comfort a stove was supplied,
With a long pipe to carry the smoke to the side,
And pleasant it was on a cold frosty day,
If your seat chanced to be very near that way.
Round three sides of the building the gallery ran,
Which I'll try to describe if I possibly can.
There facing the preacher were organ and choir (xi)—
They were close to the ceiling and could not be higher—

xi. A small organ had been purchased in Sloper's time. Before then the singing was started with a tuning-fork and supported with two flutes and a bass viol.

Grave men and women, maidens and boys,
All joined in the singing, producing a noise
Which, if not melodious, did certainly raise
The services louder in song and in praise.
The clerk read the hymns out, a verse at a time,
Then singers and people would heartily join;
And good old tunes we can never forget
To the choicest of hymns were invariably set.

. . . . . .

At one end of the building, were vestry and room
Where friends met for prayer and would welcome you soon,
There tea meetings often enlivened the scene,
Those were happiest days that have ever been seen.
But they have all gone, with faces we knew,
Those men of the past who to conscience were true.
The Meeting House, too, is a thing of the past,
Like things of the earth that are not meant to last' (66).

Such was the building which in 1855 made way for the present chapel, erected, as the specification required, 'in the Italian style of architecture, and to be carried out in all its details with excellent taste and finish.' In 1866, when a new organ was installed by Halmshaw of Birmingham, it was stipulated that its design should be Grecian (628. 52). Any pagan style would do, so long as it distinguished them from the style of that Christian Church from which they had dissented. To ape the architecture of the English parish church was the unpardonable sin (xii). That same year, when Pastor Griffith went to the opening of the first Independent Church in Luton, he was distressed to see a glaring instance of that very sin. On his return he puts this caustic note in the Church-book: 'This is

xii. 'I disagree with you,' writes Mr. Halley Stewart. 'It was not anti-church, but persecution that compelled the building of humble meeting-houses where they would be less open to observation. It was a natural conservatism, aided by poverty, and the cost of maintaining an educated Ministry that led to opposition to improvements in architecture and the methods of worship.' This is an interesting problem. The author is inclined to think that 'plainness' in building as in worship was adopted not altogether of necessity but for its own sake, a sign and symbol of protest against that idolatry in things of wood and stone and against that splendour and sacerdotalism in worship which, as it appeared to a Nonconforming conscience, had led the Church of Rome and the Church of England so very far astray. By way of local illustration one might cite the words of the well-known preacher, William Huntingdon, 1745–1813, who was responsible for the building of the Welwyn Independent Chapel: 'Build as plain as you can,' he said; 'to keep out wind and rain is all we want' (639. 19). There is a useful discussion of the subject in *Nonconformist Church Architecture*, by Ronald P. Jones, M.A., 1914.

the first Nonconformist place within 25 miles or so with a *spire* and called a *church*' (628. 52).

For a similar reason Griffith preferred the old and historic name of 'Independents' to the term 'Congregationalists,' then (1832) recently adopted: 'We should not,' he protested, 'let the fighting force go out of this Society. We have stood, and ought to stand, in the new battle with Scepticism, for all that is manly and fearless' (622). Dr. R. W. Dale, in his *History of English Congregationalism*, insists that the word 'Independency' has only a negative sense; but to Pastor Griffith and other stalwarts of the older school it was the sacred symbol of a living, positive faith. Under that banner of a name they had fought a tyrannical king and a priest-ridden, persecuting Church. Under that name, and no other, would they continue to fight the good fight and finish their course.

Where such convictions are held it is not surprising to find a resolute resistance to the attempts of the younger Congregationalists to 'churchify' the chapel services. To the older school it seemed preposterous, if not Popish, to squander money, as they were continually being asked to do, for the enlargement of the organ. In 1881, when they had unwillingly agreed to 'the introduction of an anthem at the Sunday evening Service,' they had limited their sanction to that 'simple kind of anthem in which all the congregation can join' (628. 120). Were hundreds of pounds' worth of pipes required for that? Where, in God's name, would all these innovations lead? The game of protesting is a losing game; but for conscience' sake they went on protesting to the end, not over this only, but, in 1899, over the chanting of the Lord's Prayer, and, five years later, over concluding the hymns, as do the Anglicans, with an 'Amen' (628. 279, 323).

We have called these later Church-books dull, but it would be wrong to belittle their contents. They do bear witness, and in no uncertain voice, to the steady growth of the Church, in numbers, in harmony of congregational life, in spiritual experience. There is the progress of the Sunday School; the decision, in 1876, to take over the working of the Back Street Ragged School (628. 93). There is the more careful administration of the Church property, endowments and charities; and the provision of a minister's house costing £900 in 1883 (628. 146). There is the gradual decrease in cases of discipline; the besetting

sin of intemperance is no longer apparent. One finds only venial offences, e.g. in 1866, when Fanny Buckingham is requested, not even 'required,' to stay away from the Ordinance for a petty purloining of her mistress's sugar (628. 53). There is the widening outlook; the deputies sent to the 'Three Denominations of Protestant Dissenters'; the affiliation to the Free Church Council; the petitions sent to Lord Salisbury 'for the suffering Armenians'; the 'comprehensive prayers' that embrace the whole of mankind. There is finally the creative work of the new age: the foundation of guilds and brotherhoods and those other manifestations of social service which have brought such a renewal of youth and increase of usefulness into the life of the Church.

* * * * *

Poring over the more recent pages of this book, one might fall into the danger of despising the late Victorian era as a 'day of small things.' One observes a preoccupation about trifles, e.g. '1898. After prayer, discussion upon the urns, which are in a very bad condition; 1899. Consideration given to the squeaking of the organ apparatus; 1900. Steps taken to cope with the unruly behaviour of boys in the gallery' (628. 263–4). But these are but the ripples that play for a moment over the still waters of the Church. The main current of its life runs deep and unobserved; it is 'hidden with Christ.' In all one's curious search amongst documents one does not find it. Its still, small voice is not to be heard in the fire of persecution, in the thunder of discipline. Its secret is not to be discovered in any Church-book, in any historian's page. Unfathomable, immeasurable it may be, yet one may at least render thanks for its outward and visible signs. One may rejoice over the 'works' of the Protestant Independent Dissenters in this place. And one may take leave of them, as one of their own pastors took his leave, with comfortable words of blessing and of hope: 'My fervent prayer and steadfast hope for you are that still happier days may dawn upon you, holier influences bless you, and higher sanctification reward you' (628. 57).

THE GRACECHURCH MEETING, ABOUT 1770
Isaac Sharples of Hitchin ministering

THE QUAKERS (i)

They who worship the Merciful One are they who walk on the earth gently and who, when fools speak to them, say 'Peace.'

The Koran, 25. 64.

I

Origin of the Quaker Movement.

IF this particular religious study one might well say as Chauncy, the historian of Hertfordshire, said of history in general —'This is a theme the least capable of Rhetorical Flourishes, requiring rather a smooth, methodical conduct.' Bearing that in mind, we would endeavour to speak becomingly here of a people whose founder set them an example of 'fewness yet fullness of words'; whose apologist bade them 'speak soberly of past transactions.' If we are to do justly by these just people, there must be no 'mad whimsies or runnings into imaginations'; no parade of 'sophistical science'; nothing 'set down in malice'—nothing, indeed, save 'useful and commendable knowledge.' Yet with the best intentions to write worthily of those whom the world has reviled this 'smooth methodical conduct' is not easy to attain. For one thing, the *Journals* of the early Friends have little of that economy of language which Fox observed. 'They are clothed,' as one historian has said, 'in a redundancy of language, laborious and sadly involved sentences, pages bristling with parentheses, and supplied with a niggardly sprinkling of full stops' (831.

i. For reading and revising these pages in their first unregenerate state the author is indebted to Dr. Norman Penney, F.S.A., formerly librarian to the Society of Friends at Devonshire House and editor of the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*; and likewise to Dr. Rufus M. Jones, joint author with William C. Braithwaite of the official history of Quakerism in four volumes, viz. *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 1912, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 1919, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, 2 vols., 1921. The author also desires to thank (1) A. Neave Brayshaw, author of *The Quakers, Their Story and Message*, 2nd ed., 1927, for much sound and helpful advice; (2) T. Edmund Harvey, author of *The Rise of the Quakers*, 1905, for many valuable suggestions; (3) the Hitchin Friends, for entrusting him with their records; and (4) the Librarian and staff of Friends House for their unfailing courtesy and assistance.

279). (ii) Then, again, there is a certain dehumanized quality about their writing which is still more baffling to those who wish to become familiar with these Friends. There is an effusion of Christian ink concerning their souls, but little concern with what a Hitchin Quaker disparagingly called ' the dirty business of life '; ' no word,' as Emerson complains, ' intimating that they laughed or wept, that they were married or in love, that they had been commended or cheated or chagrined. If they had ever lived and acted we are none the wiser for it.' The mere worldly historian, with his love of facts and his ' concupiscence of curiosity,' stands helpless and ashamed before this Quakerly reserve. His is a hard case. He has a solid concern to publish the truth and nothing but the truth; but no inner light shines with its benediction on his soul, and no outward light upon his brain.

By common consent the first appearance of Friends in England has been traced to the year 1647 or thereabouts, though, as Penn once remarked, ' Quakerisme is but a new nickname for old Christianity ' (655. 2. 227). Nevertheless, as Dr. Rufus Jones has amply proved (iii), there were hints and intimations of their appearing long before. In the little town of Hitchin, for example, there was a scene at the Commissary's Court as early as 1639 which no student of Quaker history could mistake. One Luke Maddingly stood up before the bullying Surrogate, William Lindall, Vicar of Hitchin, whom Bunyan afterwards referred to as ' that old enemy of the truth,' and required to know how much of the tithe he collected was distributed amongst the poor according to primitive Church custom, and how much of it he kept for his perquisite as priest. And then, if one may trust Lindall's own report, ' Joseph Wiggs came into the Court, and there standing with his hat on was admonished three times by the judge to put off his hat, and to remember in what place he then was; he answered that he would put off his hat if the judge would lend him a cap; he knew where he was—in a place made of wood, stones and other things. Being again admonished, he said that he would never remove his hat, and that, if he were before the Lord

ii. The circumlocution is not peculiar to the *Journals*. It is to be met with far and wide in the writings of the Friends. As late as 1825, for example, the *Annual Monitor*, instead of saying of John Thompson that ' he died,' says this: ' It pleased an all-wise Providence to permit the termination of his disorder to close his continuance in mutability.'

iii. See his *Studies in Mystical Religion* and *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*.

of a manor, he might have justice, but here he should not. He said, further, that he and John Clarke, who likewise stood in the Court with his hat on, did so because they bought them to keep on; that they were as good men as the Judge, and better subjects to the King than any in the Court, with many other irreverent speeches, not without sordid and rude gestures' (640).

A little while and these Peculiar People are lost to view in the confusion of the Civil War. Unable to be 'at unity' with either side in the shedding of human blood, they experienced, nevertheless, in the silent anguish of their hearts, what Woolman in after years described as 'the depth of the misery of their fellow-creatures, separated from the Divine Harmony'; and they relieved that anguish where they could by binding up the wounds of war. As for Lindall, he slunk away to hide his face in a rural parish, where he was to learn, as Laud, his master, learned, that the Church of England could not be allowed like the elder brother of the Ottoman family to strangle all its younger brothers. More than anything else it was the long-drawn-out agony of the Civil War and the disillusions of the Protectorate which caused this young brother, the Quaker (iv), to grow up and be recognized at last as of the family of Christ; for the seekers who pondered upon the sorry spectacle of these stricken battlefields, and the still sorrier spectacle of these so-called Christian bodies unchurching one another as false and schismatical, looked eagerly for that new teacher who should declare unto them the way of life and unity and peace.

Nor had they long to wait. Already in 1643 the Hitchin soldiers on garrison duty at Newport Pagnell had listened amazed to the outpourings of one George Fox, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, 'Thou seest how young people go together in vanity, and old people into the earth; thou must forsake all, both young and old, and keep out of all, and be as a stranger unto all' (856. 3). As yet Fox himself was but a seeker, in sorrow and darkness of soul, 'going after new lights and finding

iv. As to the origin of the name Quaker, George Fox states in his *Journal*: 'Justice Bennett of Darby first called us Quakers because wee bid him tremble at the Word of God, and this was in the year 1650' (Camb. ed., I. 4). William Penn writes: 'One of the first that scornfully gave us the name was one Bennett in Darbyshire with some other such Persecutors: howbeit for distinction sake we do write and use the name Quaker, not being ashamed of the word of God at which we have trembled. Isaiah 66. 2.' (*Serious Apology*, 1671, p. 12). Robert Barclay considered that the name came from the trembling of Friends under the powerful working of the Holy Ghost (*Apology*, prop. 11, sec. 8).

none that could speak to his condition.' But soon the trumpet-call of his voice was resounding over the length and breadth of England, 'a noble provocation,' says Carlyle, 'inviting men to resist evil, to subdue the world, and to *Be*.'

II

Opposing Forces

To the Puritan stronghold at Hitchin that trumpet did not sound in vain. From the learned discourses of Thomas Kidner at St. Mary's, and from the hedge-preaching of the Baptist Henry Denne, one seeker after another stole away unsatisfied to sit in silence amongst Friends; at first in little groups of two or three in Hitchin, and then in larger companies out of the town at Baldock. By the sixteen-fifties they were closely associated with the larger Meeting at Hertford, and some of them were no doubt assembled there on that day in 1655 when George Fox visited the town: 'And soe to Hartforde,' he says in his *Journal*, 'where there is some convinct, and is become a fine meetinge' (829. 1. 191). That same year he rode to Baldock also, and was brought to the bedside of a Baptist woman who was sick. 'When wee came there,' he writes, 'there was a many people in the house that was tender about her: and they tolde mee shee was not a woman for this worlde, and if I had any thinge to comfort her concerneinge the worlde to come I might. Soe I was moved of the Lord to speake to her; and the Lord raised her uppe so that shee was well to the astonishment of the townde and country' (829. 1. 199). 'This Baptist woman and her husband, whose name was Baldock, came to be convinced, and many hundreds of people have met at their house since. Great meetings and convincements were in those parts afterwards; many received the word of life, and sate down under the teaching of Christ, their Saviour' (856. 115).

'And soe wee went to our Inn (v) againe,' he continues in his *Journal*, 'and there was two desperate fellows fightinge soe that noe one durst come nigh them to part them. But I was moved in the Lord's power to goe to them. And when I had loosed there hands, I helde on by one hande and the other by the other hande: and I shewed them the evill of there doeinges,

v. The inn was 'in all probability the "George," for that was always afterwards the Quakers' hostel' (829. 1. 434).

and convinced them and reconciled them each to other: that they was loveinge and very thankefull soe that people admired at it' (829. 1. 199–200).

With such doings being noised abroad, it is no wonder that those in authority began to take notice. In 1656 Ralph Radcliffe, son of the squire of Hitchin Priory, enters in his note-book: 'The Quakers are growing numerous and troublesome.' In the same year Thomas Kidner, Vicar of Hitchin, feels obliged to buy John Clapham's *Full discovery and Confutation of the wicked and damnable doctrines of the Quakers*. In the same year John Bunyan, who had not long set up as a preacher in the neighbourhood, wrote his first book, *Some Gospel Truths opened*, as an attack upon the 'delusive and pernicious doctrines of those unstable souls the Quakers' (vi); and warns his own brethren lest they should be deceived by the 'high, light, frothy notions of this company of loose ranters' (831. 286). Francis Holcroft, who succeeded Bunyan as pastor of the Hitchin Baptists, was still more scornful and upbraiding: 'Know, deceivers, though you tell us a thousand times over that you own Jesus of Nazareth, till you repent and renounce your false Christ, the Light in all men, till you cast that your idol to the Bats and Moles, we will look on you as Deceivers.' Joseph Oddy, who succeeded Holcroft, wrote with more brevity but equal venom: 'Ye are a generation of vipers and I can prove it.' William Haworth, who ministered at the same time to the Hitchin Independents, was always calling attention to 'the rotten opinions of those Quaker foxes who with unwearied travel compass sea and land, spoiling the vines that have tender grapes. . . . If ever Satan transformed himself into an Angel of Light it is in this people' (648).

III

Persecution

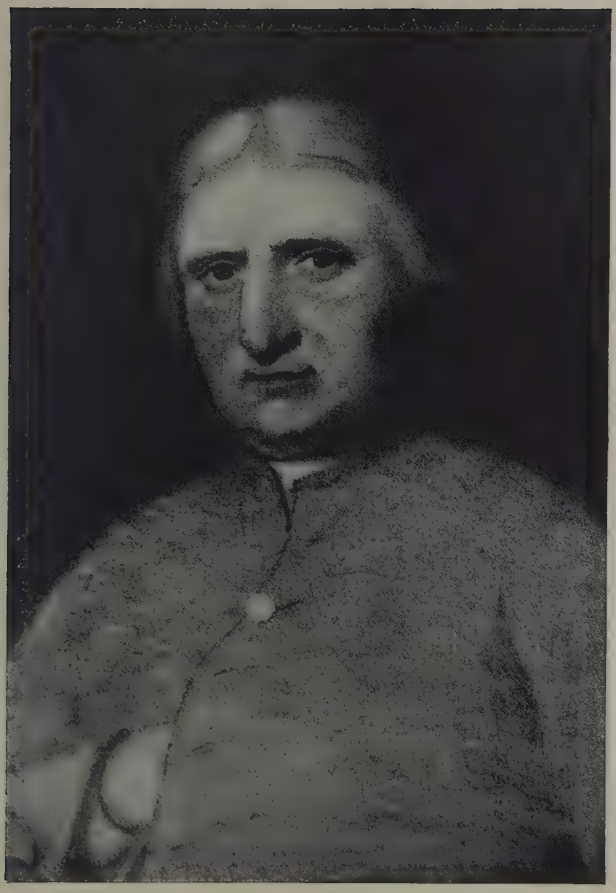
These were but the preliminary skirmishes of a war in which the fighting was to be on one side only. In 1657 the 'red dragon of persecution was unchained.' For refusing to pay tithes that year, Edward Brockett of Hitchin was imprisoned for nine weeks (669. 1. 242). For refusing to pay the priest's demands for

vi. This was taken up and answered the next year by Edward Burrough, whom Bunyan in his reply calls 'a gross, railing Rabshakeh' (831. 287).

Easter Offerings and smoke-penny, his fellow townsman, George Huckle, was the same year haled before the ' Barrons of the Lord Protector's Exchequer at Westminster,' and for his ' trespasses, contempts and offences ' was committed to prison, where he lay in bonds till 1659 (834. 52, 71). It is said by Besse, in his *Sufferings of the Quakers*, that the priest, Thomas Kidner, ' had prosecuted him out of mere malice,' and Huckle himself declared ' he never had anything tithable at all ' (669. 1. 242). In 1658, John Lucas of Hitchin was ' cast into the Fleet ' for reasons which he proceeded to ' shew to the world ' in a manifesto issued from that gaol: ' The priest makes spoyle out off our goods att home and keeps our bodies imprisoned because we could not sweare which they called a contempt; but we are obedient unto the doctrine of Christ and the Apostle who saithe sweare not at all, but are at yea and nay in our communications. And thus for obeying Christe's commandes are we imprisoned, and thus the righteous suffers and few layes it to harte, and not only we but many more in other prisons ' (834. 54, 75–6). By the following year, 1659, the ' many more ' whom Lucas refers to had increased to 164; for that same number of Friends presented a petition to Parliament to be allowed to substitute their own bodies, ' person for person,' for such of their brethren as were then in ' dungeons, houses of correction, nasty holes and prisons '; and they waited all of them in Westminster Hall whilst their ' paper ' was being debated. Amongst them were John Lane of Hitchin and John Crook, formerly Justice of the Peace for Ampthill (vii) and a leading member of Hertford Monthly Meeting (831. 455).

From Parliament they expected little and got nothing, save an order to go home and submit themselves to the laws and the magistrates. It was by the tender mercy of Parliament, as they remembered, that James Nayler, ' the first Publick Friend that came into Hertfordshire,' had been so barbarously used in December 1656—his tongue bored, his forehead branded, his body flogged by the common hangman. ' We are God's executioners,' one of the members had urged, ' and ought to be tender of His honour.' ' You had better take his life,' protested President Lawrence, ' that tongue may afterwards praise the Lord ' (831. 262). Lawrence was right. Before that mutilated tongue lay silent in the grave, it had pronounced words which are the very quintessence of Quakerism, and which, as Rufus Jones

vii. In later years Ampthill joined Hitchin Monthly Meeting.



GEORGE FOX

From a painting by Sir Peter Lely at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania

has said, give perhaps the most beautiful expression in the language to the spirit that has passed beyond martyrdom into peace. It was through Hitchin that the fallen prophet of his cause passed in October 1660. According to John Whiting, he was seen by a Friend sitting by the wayside in meditation, and passed on northwards through Huntingdon, where another Friend beheld him ' in such an awful frame (of mind) as if he had been redeemed from the earth and a stranger on it, seeking a better country and inheritance.' A few miles farther and he found it. ' There is a spirit which I feel,' he said at the last, ' that delights to do no evil nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned, and takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind ' (831. 275).

It was to be a long time before ' all this cruelty was wearied out '; a long time before the promise was redeemed that ' my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places ' (*Isaiah* 32. 18). If under the Protectorate the Quakers were unprotected, at the Restoration it was not they who were restored. Only a few months after Charles II, in his *Declaration of Breda*, had promised ' liberty to tender consciences,' the magistrates dispersed a Meeting of the Friends in Hitchin. When they sat down with their brethren at Baldock instead, they were still more despitefully used. ' A constable,' writes Besse, ' with many rude attendants rushed into the Meeting, and after many blows and abuses forcibly dragged out Thomas Baldock, Thomas Burr and fifteen more, whom they kept all night at an inn without beds, and next day carried them to Hertford, where they were committed to the county jail ' (669. 1. 249). ' They go like lambs,' the diarist Pepys observed, ' without any resistance. I would to God they would either conform or be more wise and not be catched.' But he marvelled not only at the patience of the Friends, but at their pertinacity and pluck. Arriving at Baldock on the 6th August, 1661, the year after their Meeting was broken up, he says with an air of

astonishment, ' the Quakers do still continue and rather grow than lessen.' Evidently a new spirit, and with it a fresh problem had arisen, which gave the authorities no little cause for alarm. ' They are an active and subtill people,' reports Sir Robert Hildyard to Whitehall in 1661, ' they have constant meetings and intelligence all over the kingdome, and contributions for to carry on their horrid designes, though masked under the specious pretence of religion and piety. They also keep registers of all the affronts and injuries that is done to any of them, when, where and by whom ' (viii) (851. 8). In another official report of Sir John Lowther, filed in the year of the Great Plague, 1665, he says: ' We are (thanks be to God) free from any more than ordinary sicknesses; the most contagious is that of the Quaker, which multiplies here, for though we have some under the lash yet [for] the want of the executive part, transportation, our good intentions stand us in little steed ' (834. 241).

IV

Heroic Passive Resistance

In these parts the authorities showed that they, too, could be ' active and subtill people.' They meant to give these zealots their fill of persecution, even if they did seem to flourish on it. In the *Acta* of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, still preserved at Hitchin, one reads that on October 12, 1662, John Turner, Edward Brockett, Abraham Wye, Edward Draper and three other Hitchin Friends were presented for not causing their children to be baptized. On October 30, 1663, six other Hitchin Quakers were heavily fined for not paying their rates to the Church. On June 3, 1664, five were presented ' for standing excommunicate '; twenty-eight more ' for not coming to their parish church to hear divine service; the Widow Rowley and the Widow Whittingstall for not causing their husbands, and Edward Draper for not causing his child, to be buried in Christian burial (ix); and Francis Field of Hitchin, Shopkeeper, ' for being

viii. Compare Margaret Fell's letter to Colonel Kirkby from Swarthmoor, 20th of 10th month, 1664: ' Wee are willing to give up to the will of the Lord, and to give up our backs to the smiter, knowing that the Lord in his due time will visit for these things ' (829. 2. 393).

ix. Amongst the rolls of Herts Quarter Sessions is a memorandum under the year 1662 of certain ' Anabaptists, Independents and Quakers who were

a disperser of Quakers' Books' (632. 638). By the passing of the Conventicle Act of 1664, which was a restatement in stronger terms of the Quaker Act of 1662, the powers of the persecutors were enlarged, and the Friends' sufferings correspondingly increased. Under this statute a third conviction was made punishable by transportation; and by the craft and subtlety of the authorities the sentences on the first and second convictions were lightened so as to lead on more rapidly to the extreme penalty. Within six weeks of the Act's coming into force there were nine cases at Hertford Assizes already ripe for banishment (851. 42). After bullying the Grand Jury into finding a true bill, the judge, Sir Orlando Bridgman, charged the common jurors 'not to expect a plain, punctual evidence against them for anything they said or did at their meeting; for they may speak to one another, though not with or by auricular sound, but by a cast of the eye, or a motion of the head or foot, or gesture of the body; and they themselves say that the worship of God is inward in the spirit, and that they can discern spirits and know one another in the spirit. If you believe in your hearts that they were in the meeting under colour of religion in their way, then it was an unlawful meeting . . . for it is an easy matter at such meetings to conspire and consult mischief' (851. 43). In the result, eight of the nine were sentenced to seven years' transportation, but, after struggling with contrary winds between London and Deal for nearly two months, the captain of the ship which was to take them to Jamaica and Barbados put them ashore, with a certificate declaring that he perceived that the hand of the Lord was against him, and that his men refused to continue the voyage if he carried the Quakers. The eight Friends returned to London and calmly notified the King of the facts; whereupon an Order in Council issued to secure them until further means of transportation could be found; and under that order they remained, forgotten in prison, until the Great Pardon of 1672 (851. 43–4).

But the greater number of the cases against the Hitchin, Baldock and Hertford Quakers in that year, 1664, were heard at Quarter Sessions before Sir Henry Chauncy. On the title-page of the contemporary *Relation of the unjust proceedings of some called justices at Hertford upon the Tryall of one and twenty innocent*

gathered together to bury an old man in an orchard.' The name of the parish does not appear, but some of the surnames are those of Hitchin people (72. 1. 148).

persons called Quakers for a pretended breach of the late Act there is printed this accusation from *Isaiah* 59. 11: 'Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street and equity cannot enter.' Thomas Moss, one of the prisoners, who 'with divers other malefactors was taken at an unlawful meeting or conventicle at the house of Thomas Baldock of Baldock under the colour of Religious Exercise to the disturbing of the Peace and endangering the King's Crown and Dignity,' said he had frequented that meeting for seven years, but only 'to wait upon the Lord and to receive refreshment from his presence.' 'The light within you,' burst out Thomas, Viscount Fanshawe, from the Bench, 'is but a melancholy vapour of the brain, and leads you to one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow so that you change every day.' 'Thou hast not found us so changeable hitherto,' answered Thomas Burr, 'neither wilt thou' (641). In that he spake true. There never was a body of men so inflexible or constant in their views. Nothing that the world might do to them made one jot or tittle of difference; they went on in 'heroic tranquillity' as before. 'Have we not always been a quiet, peaceable, harmless people?' exclaimed Ellwood, about this time. 'When, being reviled, did we revile? Or when, being persecuted, did we not patiently suffer it? Do you think to root us out and destroy God's heritage? It is impossible. The root of Jesse bears us; and upon the unmovable rocks are we immovably built.' Of many at Hitchin it might be said, as was said of John Furly in 1663, 'he hath a wife full of sorrowes, a familie full of children, and his hands full of bussinesse, all of which are now in a suffering if not a perisshing condition' (834. 181); yet they were outwardly as ever unmoved, and their souls undisquieted within them. The unrighteous might think to oppress them, as they had oppressed 'the holy nation' of old. They might shut them up as 'prisoners of darkness and fetter them with the bonds of a long night.' But not even the unrighteous could 'exile them from the eternal providence,' or break their indomitable spirit. 'Being clothed in innocency,' writes Barclay in dedicating his *Apology* to the King in 1678, 'in the hottest times of persecution and the most violent prosecution of laws made against meetings, they have boldly stood to their testimony for God without creeping into holes or corners, or once hiding themselves as all other dissenters have done, so that none of thy officers can say they surprised them in a corner, overtook them in a private conventicle

or catched them lurking in their secret chambers, nor needed they to send out spies to get them whom they were sure daily to find in their open assemblies testifying for God and his truth.'

V

Continued Persecution

And so when George Fox revisited Baldock in 1667, though eleven Friends had been banished and many more had had their 'removal' to Hertford gaol, he is able to say, 'I had a great meetinge of many hundreds of people' (829. 2. 119). Disguised amongst those many sorts of people lurked those informers for whom already the town of Baldock was notorious, and whose receipts for their share of the spoil can be seen to this day in the Quarter Sessions Rolls. The passing of the second Conventicle Act of 1670, which Marvell described as 'the quintessence of arbitrary malice,' made another boom in their nefarious trade (851. 67). 'On May 12, 1670,' writes Besse, 'a meeting was held at Thomas Burr's house in Baldock, for which he, though then in prison, was fined twenty pounds. When Robinson, an informer, came to make distress, he found Burr's malt-house shut up, of which he complained to the justices Radcliffe and Wilmot, who, under a pretence of searching for a Conventicle, granted a warrant to break open the doors, which the officers being backward to do (x), the justices came in person, and threatened the chief constable to fine him £500 if he did not break open the doors of the malt-loft. At length the informer burst open the doors, and they took away twenty-six quarters of malt, part of which was put in the market house because no person in the town would receive it. On the 17th of next month Thomas Burr was again fined for four several meetings at his house, for which they again broke open his malt-house and carried away a hundred and four quarters of malt. Thus, while close confined in prison, he suffered the spoiling of his goods to the value of £130' (669. 1. 249). It is not surprising that he was reduced before long to 'settle his estate to satisfye his creditors.'

x. 'If it please your Worships,' they reported, 'here is all we could come at, for all the gates and doores were all lockt that we could not come at noe more of their goodes save two paires of shooes, 5s.: 6 paire of stockings, 5s.: one doz. of candles, 4s. 6d.: and two bushel of malt, 5s.; therefor we would desire your worships not to be very strict with us, for we have done our endeavours to get them all distrayned' (72. 1. 263).

Two days later, June 19, 1670, writes Besse: 'Justice Ratcliffe (xi) came to the Friends' Meeting at Hitchin and said, "I hope you will not deny that this is a religious assembly," repeating the same words several times. One present answered, "It is a religious meeting"; he replied, "That's enough," and gave his warrant to distrain for £20; to levy which the officers broke open the doors of Frances Field, widdow, and for a silent Meeting beinge at her house in the towne of Hitchinge they took away goods worth £10 which they sold for 40s. They also took, for part of the same fine, from William Turner goods to the value of £14; and on the next day from Samuel Crouch, John Barker, John Mansfield, and William Marshall, goods worth £1 19s.' (669. 1. 249). It was alleged by the constables in justification that unless they sold 'great penniworths' they could not sell at all.

Yet another raid was made by Justice Radcliffe in 1672, one of the sufferers being the wife of Francis Penn, whose family was for many years prominent amongst Hitchin Quakers, the house of Susan Penn of Preston being registered as a place of meeting for the outlying members of the Society in 1711 (632. 638). In spite of this raid, however, the year 1672 was a year to be held in merciful remembrance. There was first the Declaration of Indulgence, and then the Great Pardon, to which as many as 491 prisoners owed their release (xii). From this time forward and until the Toleration Act of 1689 was passed it becomes evident that the violent persecuting spirit of the Cavalier Parliament was dying down. Friends are still haled off to Hertford, e.g. Abraham Thompson in 1673; William Lucas and Samuel Newman in 1684; Thomas Baldock in 1685, this last on the trumped-up charge of an informer for being concerned in the Duke of Monmouth's Rebellion (72. 1. 352). But these are solitary cases. There is no longer any wholesale slaughter of the innocents. For denying the priest his due, and for default in payment of fines levied for not coming to church, they are dis-

xi. Ralph Radcliffe had succeeded to the Priory estates in 1660 and had received a knighthood. The Quakers, of course, would not recognize his title; and they referred to his wife as 'a female of the name of Mary Radcliffe, who was called a Lady.'

xii. It is no small tribute to the magnanimity of Friends that the names of John Bunyan, whose first book had been directed against the Quakers, and Francis Holcroft, who, as pastor of the Hitchin Baptists, had preached against them, were inserted in their own particular pardon (851. 85).

FRIENDS MEETING-HOUSE AT HERTFORD

Back view; from a photograph by E. E. Squires, 1929

trained upon as before; but what is taken begins to bear more relation to what is due, and the sympathizing townsmen stand aside and allow them or their friends to buy back their own goods. Sometimes, indeed, it happened, as in the oft-cited instance of John Gratton, that 'when people heard the sale of goods proclaimed, they wished sad things to such as bought any of them,' so that none were sold (xiii) (851. 80). Slowly but surely, as Nayler had prophesied, they 'were outliving all wrath and contention, and wearying out all cruelty,' and had some hope now 'to enjoy their own in the end.'

VI

Beginnings of Organization

Even before the passing of the Toleration Act we may observe a settling down, or 'centreing down' as they would say, into the quiet security of meetings. In 1683 a collection of notables going under the name of the 'Royston Club,' of whom Sir Ralph Radcliffe was the moving spirit, had 'resolved the pulling down of the Quaker Meeting House at Hertford'; but they were made to learn that even magistrates must condescend to keep the law; and to their shame and indignation had money extracted from them in the courts to build a larger Conventicle than the one they had destroyed (79. 2. 40). After that fiasco there was no further interference with the Quaker way of worship at Hertford or Baldock or Hitchin. It is unfortunate that the earliest records of Hitchin Particular Meeting are lost, but from those of Hertford Monthly Meeting, of which Hitchin formed a part, and from private sources, one can trace the beginnings of organization in this little community of Friends. There being no Meeting House as yet at Hitchin, the meetings for worship were held in the house of William Lucas, which stood where the shop of Messrs. Perks & Llewellyn, No. 9, High Street, now stands. By arrangement with the Town Constables, the barn at the back was used as a clearing-house for the goods and chattels taken from the members in distraint.

xiii. Besse, who is always pleased to point out when the ungodly perish, does not forget the 'Concurrence of Disasters that soon after happened to the buyers' of Robert Huntingdon's goods, 1670. He adds: 'We think it but just to lay before our Readers the Fact . . . and leave them to form such a Judgment thereof, as from the Nature of the Case, when maturely considered, shall result' (669. 1. 131).

If any member was impoverished through this cause or another, he was not allowed to want. Sometimes in money, sometimes in kind, a weekly allowance would be made. In 1669 a sum of 25s. was raised in Hitchin Meeting 'for those which were sent to the goall and not able to main-taine themselves' (643. 1). In 1670 the sum of £2 16s. 'for binding of apprentices and relieff of the poor' (643. 2). In 1683 a cow was purchased and lent round to needy families (643. 7). In 1685 William Turner of Hitchin was appointed to look after the Friends' Sufferings for the year, with special direction to visit those members in prison who had sickened of the smallpox (643. 8). Nor were the needs of others overlooked. In 1673 the sum of £2 7s. 6d. was contributed 'on account of Friends beyond sea' (643. 4). In 1679 the sum of £1 3s. 5d. was collected 'towards the Redemption of Friends taken by the Turks, perticular by the Algerian Men of War'; six years later a further £1 12s. 6d. was raised on their account (xiv) (643. 6). In 1688 the sum of £6 was sent to 'their suffering Friends and brethren in Ireland,' who four years earlier had sent five pounds to them (643. 9). In 1698 £1 17s. 6d. was subscribed 'for the relief of Friends in the North part of Scotland, by reason of the scarcity there by the failing of their crops for three years last past' (643. 10).

Marriages and matters of discipline were referred to the Monthly Meeting. In 1674, for example, Abraham Thompson of Hitchin, wheeler, and Katherine Roberts of the same town, spinster, appeared before the Friends at Hertford 'with intention to marry,' and after careful examination were certified as being 'free from any entanglement prejudicial to the married estate' (643. 5). Of the offences recorded we may notice that of Henry Essex, who had 'abused and belyed Henry Stout in reporting that he entertained a Jesuite or Popish Priest at his house, which the Meeting was satisfied was a falsehood'; the sting of the suggestion lay, of course, in the rumour then current that the Quakers themselves were but Jesuits in disguise, their leaders being identified with 'certain persons of the Franciscan Order in Rome who have of late come over to England' (831. 172). The very same calumny was raised against Wesley a hundred years later. A truer charge was maintained against Robert and

xiv. The Friends in captivity at Algiers were so numerous as to hold a Meeting there, and epistles were received from them by Friends in London.

Elizabeth Berry, ' your desolate Friends,' who signed an admission that, ' instead of marrying after the laudable manner of Truth, we did it by a priest after the Superstitious Form of the Church of England, a rash inconsiderate adventure, which was the result of a surprising temptation ' (643. 11). To check these and other disorders in their infancy, ' Masters and Parents of children are to take care that the children be more orderly at our meetings, and that they do not run out so often ' (643. 12). A list of books, ' approved by the faithful,' is to be exhibited in the shop of Thos. Field, bookseller, of Hitchin, and in 1699 he is directed to supply each Particular Meeting with a copy of John Wyeth's *The Switch for the Snake* as a counterblast to the scurrilous attack made on the Society by a pamphlet published anonymously by Charles Leslie in 1696 entitled: ' *The Snake in The Grass, or Satan transformed into an Angel of Light, discovering the deep and unsuspected Subtility which is couched under the pretended Simplicity of many of the principal Leaders of those people called Quakers* ' (xv).

The time was at hand, however, when Hitchin Friends could be trusted to deal with their own cases of discipline. As far back as 1666 Fox had been ' moved of the Lord God to sett uppe and establish monthly meetinges of men and women to admonish and exhort and to take care of God's glory ' (829. 2. 111). In 1668 he had visited the county of Hertford to carry out the Lord's will in this respect (829. 2. 119); and in 1670 it had been decreed at Quarterly Meeting that a ' Monthly Meeting should be held at Baldock for that place and for Hitchin, Ashwell, Cottered, Rushden and Stevenage ' (643. 3). As yet Hitchin Meeting was not strong enough to claim the powers of a Monthly Meeting. Nor apparently in 1678, when, as Dunnage says in his *History of Hitchin*, ' George Fox the Apostle of the Quakers visited the town ' (28. 180). On the 7th of the eleventh month, 1688, however, it was agreed at Hertford ' that Friends at Hitchin and thereabouts may keep a Monthly Meeting, and all Friends that have any business may repair there, and lay their matters before that Meeting.' After that advance there was no looking back.

xv. In following years Field and his successor are to be found distributing amongst the subscribing members of the Hitchin Meeting 7 large and 7 small copies of Barclay's *Apology*, 2 copies of John Crook's *Truth's Principles*, 2 copies of Penn's *No Cross, No Crown*, 1 copy of Pike's *Baptism and Supper*, 3 sets of Besse's *Sufferings*, and 1 copy of Thomas Story's *Journal* (643. 13).

VII

Travelling Ministers

In 1694 a meeting-house was built in the alley then known as Cod-piece Alley, but afterwards and to this day more pleasantly described as Quakers Alley (28. 180). This was not licensed under the Act; for in the hottest times of the persecution, when the other Nonconformists were driven to subterfuges which George Fox described as 'veriest hypocrisie,' the Quakers had not ceased to meet. The only licence they recognized was from God, who, when they met together, was in the midst of them. It was not long before a burial-ground was added on the outskirts of the parish. 'For a little piece in Salter's Dell,' reports Draper, the Steward of the Manor, who was also Churchwarden of St. Mary's, to his Lord and fellow-churchman in 1715, 'the Quakers pay me the quit rent of a half-penny onely by the year but if they but haste to be buried there we shall not repent the bargain. It were a blessing if this little copyhold could presently hold them all' (5). Draper, however, was not to be indulged. To his mortification these exasperating Quakers not only lived, but flourished; growing each year more and more in the nurture and admonition of George Fox. One reads of them in 1704 'agreeing to take four of George Fox's Doctrinall Books' (643. 17). It is his side they adopt in the John Perrot controversy, when those who professed to have 'received a commandment from the Lord of Heaven to bear a testimony against such a custom,' declined to remove their hats in meeting when any not of their 'quietist' persuasion prayed (851. 233, 243). One watches the 'weighty, seasoned and substantial Friends' amongst them journeying the sixteen miles to Quarterly Meeting at Hertford. In 1700 it was agreed that they should meet at an earlier hour, 'considering that some have a considerable way home' (643. 15). One hears of Friends at Hitchin Meeting helping to build other meeting-houses as far off as Bishop's Stortford. No longer a mere echo of the Hertford Meeting, they have a voice, a will, a tradition of their own. When Susan Featherstone of Hertford came to preach at them in 1701, they would not suffer her to speak. 'In divers publick meetings for worship,' they protest, 'she hath shewed herself to be a troublesome, malicious and vexatious woman, and one that ought by some convenient method to be put to silence' (643. 16).

To those 'publick Friends,' on the other hand, who had a concern to establish them in the faith, they listened with 'unity and satisfaction.' In the first year of their setting up as a Monthly Meeting, 1689, there came John Taylor, formerly a planter in Barbados, but recently settled at York, to whom George Fox, as he took him by the hand, had said these memorable words: 'Young man, this is the word of the Lord to thee: there are three scriptures thou must witness to be fulfilled; first thou must be turned from darkness to light; next thou must come to the knowledge of the glory of God; and then thou must be changed from glory to glory' (851. 442).

In 1695 they were favoured with a visit from James Dickinson (xvi), the friend of Robert Barclay, who had just fulfilled the 'command' to prophesy against the wicked people of London by crying along their streets: 'Woe, woe, woe from the Lord' (28. 180; 665). From Pennsylvania the same year came Thomas Janney, whose profound solemnity of words made all the deeper impression because he passed from the silence of their meeting into the silence of the grave. He died suddenly at the house of William Turner, the leading Hitchin Friend of that period, and lies buried in Salter's Dell (xvii) (649. 180).

But it was by Thomas Story, the lifelong friend of William Penn, that they were visited most of all. In the *Journal* of this gifted and beloved minister there are as many as eight visits recorded between 1714 and 1740. 'On the fifth of the 10th month, 1714,' he writes, 'I went to Hitchin, where I was at their week-day meeting, which was small, no notice having been given. That night I tarried at the Widow Susannah Turner's.' On the fourth day of the 5th month, 1717, he was again with them: 'The beginning of the meeting this day was very heavy and dull, a dead spirit being over several; but in the end the Lord quickened us together; the most were comforted and helped and the rest reproved.' On the twenty-eighth day of 4th month, 1722, he

xvi. There is a useful record of his ministry, which lasted over sixty-five years, in the D.N.B., vol. xv, p. 34; but to get the full flavour of his adventurous life by land and sea, his shipwrecks, his sufferings, his escapes, the spirited pages of his own *Journal* should be read. It was edited by W. and J. Evans in 1848. It was upon Dickinson's advice, it may be added, that the vast undertaking known as Besse's *Sufferings* was put in hand.

xvii. So says William Dunnage, the historian of Hitchin. But, according to the testimony to Janney in *Piety Promoted*, he struggled back to Cheshire, where he had been born, and there died, saying, 'I have been faithful in my day and have nothing that troubles my spirit' (649. 180).

notes: 'I went to Hitchin, being their week-day meeting, which was very heavy and sleepy a while, but afterwards very open and tender, and ended in a living sense of the goodness of the Lord.' On the fifth day of the 5th month, 1733, 'having lodged with my friend John Turner, who was,' as he notes later on, 'of a good old primitive stock,' he went in his company to Baldock Meeting, with whose Friends the Hitchin Friends still constantly 'sat down.' 'Indifferent well,' says Story on this occasion, 'but might have been better if a certain confident female had not entertained the auditory too long with certain of the Old Testament writings reduced by her into songs, which she thought melodious, and others despised, and canted in that manner' (666). It is not surprising that Story's *Journal* was much asked for by Hitchin Friends when, after his death, it was added to their other books: '1751. This Meeting is of opinion that two months is time sufficient for a family to have Thomas Story's Journal at once' (658).

VIII

Preparative and Monthly Meetings

After 1734 one is not driven to the journals of visiting Ministers in order to learn about the Hitchin Quakers. Their own books of record begin in that year, and a glance at the appropriate section of the Bibliography will show how voluminous these are (xviii). Here we can stay only to classify their principal contents; for it is out of the question to follow in any forthright manner the progress of a Society whose chief concern has been to abide by its ancient testimony. And first of all a word about the constitution of the Hitchin Monthly Meeting, its officers and its organization, for there is more method in the quietism of the Quaker than a stranger would suspect. Lowest in degree, though by no means the least useful, came the Preparative or Particular Meeting, which sifted the business and prepared the way of the Monthly Meeting. At the Monthly Meeting, made up of several contiguous Particular Meetings, and existing primarily for dis-

xviii. As the records of the Hitchin Friends are so often unpaginated, I have thought it more convenient as a reference to give simply the year (and wherever needful the month and the day) of each passage cited. The denoting number from the Bibliography will show whether the extract is made from the Preparative Meeting, Monthly Meeting, or Quarterly Meeting books, and in whose custody these books of record are.

cipline, delegates were set apart to attend the Quarterly Meeting. There was in addition a Woman's Meeting and a Meeting for Ministers and Elders. Each Meeting had its own appointed clerk to gather up the sense or feeling of the members and bring them to unity; and to the Monthly Meeting fell the duty of answering certain Queries as to the worldly behaviour and spiritual advancement of the several members and the well-being of the Society as a whole.

Besides these officers, there were Overseers to look after the Meeting-House and relieve the poor, and there were Doorkeepers, and Guides for travelling ministers. As for the Elders, they exercised a general pastoral oversight and assisted and, if need be, admonished the Ministers, whose names were 'recorded' as such only after long trial and approbation in the three meetings for worship. Of these, one was accustomed to be held in the morning of the fifth day of the week, and the other two on the first day, at nine in the morning and again at two. In the course of time, 1794, it was found needful to change the hour of the afternoon meeting, for it was difficult to give a clear answer to the seventh query of the Quarterly Meeting, which required to know: 'How are Friends preserved from giving way to a Sleepy, Drowsey Disposition in Meetings of Worship, and is care taken to Advise and Admonish such as are Addicted thereto?' Finally, it was agreed 'to begin the afternoon, first-day meeting at 5 o'clock during the summer to prevent the prevailing heaviness painfully attending the holding of it at the usual time' (658).

There is one other change to be mentioned which more closely affected the constitution of the Monthly Meeting. On the 26th of the sixth month, 1734, Joseph Ransom and John Turner appeared before the Baldock and Royston Monthly Meeting with the following proposal: 'Forasmuch, dear Friends, as it hath pleased the Lord to remove from us severall of our faithful friends who was in their day and time very serviceable in our meeting of Business, our number being now small to carry on the work of Discipline the Lord may be pleased to requier of us, we conceive a joyning with you as one monthly meeting would be a strenthning each other in promoteing Truth and Righteousness in respect to discipline in our day. In which we salute you and remain: Mary Ransom, Sarah Skegg, Mercy Crawley, Sarah Hawkins, Mary Crawley, William Lucas, John Turner, Joseph Ransom, Joseph Thompson, Thomas Skegg, Josiah Hawkins and Thomas

Skegg, junior ' (658). On that occasion the Baldock and Royston members were not disposed to agree to the proposal, but they proved more willing when it was renewed in 1761; in the interval they on their part had had to admit ' a great deficiency in attending our week-day meetings, as also a sorrowful Defection in supporting our Testimony against Tithes, and observing plainness of habit and speech.' The two Monthly Meetings were accordingly united under the style of Baldock, Royston and Hitchin Monthly Meeting, which was to be held at each town in rotation on the last second day of every month, ' except in the midst of winter when the days are short; then it may be held for two or three months together at Baldock as Friends see convenient.' Each Particular Meeting was to hold its own Preparative Meeting as before, to provide for its own poor and keep its own Meeting-house and burial-ground in order (679). One by one, Ashwell, Stotfold, Cranfield, Pulloxhill and Ampthill Meetings were absorbed into the same Monthly Meeting; on the merger of the last named in 1798 it was decided that, as Baldock and Royston Friends had diminished whilst those at Hitchin had increased, the combined Meetings should thenceforth go under the name of Hitchin Monthly Meeting (679).

IX

Discipline and Disownments

With this background in mind, we can now peer more profitably into the books of record, which, be it remembered, are concerned, not so much with things spiritual as with matters of order and administration to which any religious society, however unworldly, is bound to give attention. By one thing the student of the Hitchin records will be struck—to wit, the paucity of serious offences in the books of discipline. In these thousands upon thousands of pages one meets now and then with disownment of members for drunkenness, fornication, adultery and even highway robbery. But in an era given over to such sins the Quaker testimony is plain and sure. Conscious—perhaps too conscious—that they were a race of men set apart, watched by a world of other men full of envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness, they took heed to their ways and conducted themselves in a manner worthy of their high calling. It may be that those who were

born into the Society were not tempted as other men. To the ordinary human being they seemed inhuman in their innocence: an order of men and women almost as silent and enclosed as those Carthusians who, if ever they stepped out of the correct parlour of reason, were amazed and pained to find how irrational and blind the life of man could be. No doubt it was this deliverance from evil in themselves which led these ninety-and-nine just persons to be sometimes so hard on that one black sheep of their own flock who went astray. But it should be remembered that they had been trained in a hard school; and if discipline was to mean anything at all it was expedient that one should suffer rather than the whole Society should perish. In cases like that of William Hine one has no feeling of pity. 'If lenitives will not do,' said Penn in a former day, 'then coercives must be tried.' Here was a man 'in indigent circumstances, out of work, destitute of a house, and sick of body, both himself and his wife,' whom the Society had helped to maintain more than twenty-seven years. Yet he and his family were so far ungrateful as 'to neglect the great duty of the public worship of Almighty God in our religious meetings,' and so 'reproachful in their Christian profession' as to take pleasure in 'intemperate drinking, lewd conduct and swearing.' One of the sons, instead of 'appearing to be truely sensible of the grossness of his immoralities,' had the effrontery to 'desire no longer to be accounted a member of our Society,' as though he would disown connection with people who were not worthy of *his* society.

That was the last straw. In 1800 the Monthly Meeting took the unexampled step of disowning the whole family, Mary Hine the mother, Mary Hine the daughter, William, Thomas, John and Samuel the sons—all, indeed, save the father, who was by that time too infirm to attend Meeting and too old to indulge in immoralities. Yet the forbearance and charity of the Friends are evident in the judgement that went forth against this household of evil and unfaith: 'Divers opportunities of friendly admonition having been taken with them respectively but without the desired effect, this Meeting, having no unity with their deviations from our religious principles, after long waiting and apprehending itself clear, deems it incumbent to testify against them, and doth hereby declare that we do not consider them any longer as members of our Society; yet desirous for each of them that, ere the day of gracious visitation be passed over, they may wisely

close in therewith to their establishment in the unchangeable truth and the satisfaction of their friends' (679). There you have a righteous judgement indeed, but to disown a member 'for irregular conversation since his marriage, being guilty of swearing,' and another for 'the pernicious practice of tale-bearing and Detraction,' and another man and wife for 'secretly attending the meetings of the Methodists, wherewith they seemed well-satisfied,' appears unduly severe. After all, disownment was an almost irrevocable decree, something quite different from the 'suspension' which the Baptists and Independents applied to the less serious offences. Only once or twice was the final sentence received with any spirit of scoffing. Samuel Manns in 1783 answered back that 'he did not know it would do him any harm'; and Abraham Thorne that same year impudently declared that 'he thought to attend meetings as before and desired his love to Friends' (679). But sooner or later most of these prodigal sons came to themselves, and discovered that 'no man gave unto them'; for those whom the Quakers had cast out were not readily received elsewhere. Nor was it possible to arise and go back to their father's house, that quiet enclosed garden of innocence from which they had been driven. The clerk, with his pen, as it were a flaming sword, stood in the way. Though they apply in abject terms of contrition three years, ten years, fifteen years after disownment, the answer is ever the same: 'The time as we apprehend is not yet.'

After the evangelical movement of the eighteen-thirties, however, the spirit of clemency crept in. There begin to be cases in which influential or well-to-do offenders, declaring themselves 'sensible of the great uneasiness I have given to many of the right-minded of the Society of which I am a member, and sorrowful that I who ought to have set a good example to others should have so far fallen short,' are reinstated. 'Having made due acknowledgment, Friends agree to extenuate the said offence, so that it may as much as possible be buried in a perpetual oblivion.' A more tolerant attitude appears also in the references to those who left the Society to attend the 'worship-houses' of other religious bodies. When Mary Kimpton in 1830 'professed a satisfaction in having joined the sect called the Church of England,' and 'arguments were altogether unavailing,' she was disowned for 'having forsaken our ministry in order to attend the hireling ministry of the Church of England.' In 1869, on

the other hand, when Samuel Lucas notified the Meeting that he had become a member of the Church of England, there was no talk of hireling ministry or sect. Only this: 'We would express our earnest desire for his christian welfare' (679).

X

Marriages 'Out' and 'In'

Whilst we are considering cases of disownment, it will be fitting to refer to what Sarah Grubb, who twice visited the Hitchin Meeting, used to call 'this awfull business of marriage'; for 'marriage out of the Society' has caused more disownments than any other misdoing. The loss of membership, direct and indirect, on this account at Hitchin is too great and too grievous to estimate; but we might venture to say that the Meeting has lost more by marriage than by death. Time was, in the first days of persecution, as William Dewsbury said, when 'those who marry must be as though they married not, and those who have husbands as though they had none, for the Lord calls for all to be offered up' (xix) (831. 363). But, from the date of the Toleration Act, when the Society began to settle down, there had been the strictest enforcement of this rigid, man-made rule. 'Rich indeed must be that church which can spare such members for such a cause'; such is the reflection of John Stephenson Rowntree in his examination into the decline of Quakerism—*Quakerism, Past and Present*, published in 1859, the year in which the disownment penalty on mixed marriages was at last annulled. It was a pity, he added, that the Friends, so active in reforming the criminal code of the nation, should not have sat down to consider the reformation of their own (853. 2. 949).

In these disorders of human love, these 'foolish and unbridled affections,' the Quakers came up against something as inflexible as themselves, something that had existed before the Society, or any religious society, began. It was, they felt, something irrational and ungodly. The poets had sung of it as a divine unreason, but then the poets were not to be trusted. With their

xix. This was said to Lydia, the wife of John Roberts of Siddington, Gloucestershire, from a branch of whose family the Thompsons of Hitchin are descended. In 1859 John Thompson of Hitchin brought out a new edition of John Roberts's *Memoirs*, which is a little oasis of good-humour and good writing in the interminable desert of the Quaker Journals.

own reason, coolly and cautiously employed, they could not comprehend its violent, irresistible attraction. On the unheeding ears of lovers their own calm words of advice made not the least impression. Here is just one out of a hundred similar cases. In the year 1755 it is brought to the notice of the Preparative Meeting that Sarah Skegg ' is intending to marry one that doth not profess with us.' Two members are accordingly desired to visit her. At a subsequent meeting they report that ' she is still keeping company with the young man, notwithstanding the great care of Friends in their private visits and advices to both mother and daughter ' (658). The Monthly Meeting is then informed, and two of the Elders, and two women from the Women's Meeting, are asked to apply their powers of persuasion. In due season they return, and their words also return unto them void: ' They don't find but that they persist in the same way; wherefore this meeting think themselves so far clear of them, and leave it for the present to see the effect of the many advices they have had ' (679). In the meantime, fearing lest another visitation should befall them, Sarah and her young man steal away to a hireling priest and are married by special licence. And so another Quaker and her children after her are lost to the Society of Friends.

In most cases the admonition of the visiting Friends, however trying to endure, was taken in good part. Phoebe Goodchild, for example, in 1781, ' though she seemed not to have a due sense of her outgoing, yet spoke respectfully of Friends, whom she left to their liberty to act as they see meet towards her.' The phrasing of the ' Testimony of Denial ' in her case betrays a gleam of understanding if not of sympathy; it accuses her not so much of wilful disobedience to the ancient rule of Friends as ' of suffering the affectionate part to prevail in her Mind over the New Principle of Truth ' (679). Sometimes, however, the respect due to Elders and betters was not observed. The offenders were ' disposed to stout it out.' When Mary Hiorne was visited by Samuel Spavold and Isaac Gray in 1768, ' for encouraging the company of one of another Society in order for marriage,' she ' informed them it was gone too far to break off,' and left them abruptly to draw what conclusion and comfort they might please. Mary Brett, being visited in 1778, told them roundly that she was astonished and pained at their suspicions: ' She don't think of marrying at her childish age, but don't incline to relinquish her

acquaintance with her neighbours; says she don't keep company with any young man in particular.' When John Tallwin in 1781 persisted in visiting Mary Stallybrass, even after her mixed marriage had been consummated, she was brazen enough to 'justify her conduct, saying she might have done worse had she married in the Society' (679).

There is one case, however, in which the incessant labour of Friends, helped out by the fickleness of man's desire, was apparently successful; but it took three years to accomplish. In the third month, 1792, John Pryor and Henry Kite, 'having had frequent opportunities with John Neaves,' report that 'altho' at one time these seemed likely to prove affectual, yet he hath since unwarily renewed the connection, and thinks he cannot with honour become disengaged.' The following month Rudd Wheeler and William Lucas were appointed to visit Neaves. By this time there was a slight sign of relenting. He still felt 'not at liberty to retract, yet seemed disposed to wait to see whether time might not convince both parties of the Impropriety of their being married whilst of different religious persuasions.' Two months later, 'on another opportunity being taken,' the young man appears still 'more sensible of his error and desirous of extricating himself in a manner consistent with justice towards the young woman if possible and agreeable to the advice of his friends.' In the eleventh month, 1792, Rudd Wheeler 'has some encouragement to hope the subject of complaint appears in a probable way of being removed.' In the sixth month, 1793, the young man admits that 'the connection between him and the young woman was not wholly broken off, nor could he say how it might terminate, yet expressed a desire of its coming to that issue.' In the third month, 1794, 'it seems likely to terminate.' The last step is not recorded till the first month, 1795. 'He now considers himself clear of the connection for which he was visited by the meeting, and requests a certificate on his removal to Melksham in the compass of the Wiltshire Monthly Meeting' (679).

Here in this solitary instance you have the Quaker strain in John Neaves responding slowly but surely to suggestion. As a rule, however, the visits of the Friends only precipitated matters; the parties married in haste and perhaps repented at leisure. By one cynical student of Quaker records it has been insinuated that there are ample signs of contrition evident about a year after these mixed marriages. In this he is undoubtedly mistaken, because

after disownment there was no more to be said, and no more to be known. There may be two or three applications for reinstatement in the Hitchin records, but only once is any degree of contrition shown: ' The great uneasiness my past very Blameable conduct has given me,' wrote William Pryor in 1757, ' and a very sincere sorrow for the same, is the cause of my making this public acknowledgment. I heartily wish I and all who like me have done amiss may for the future cease to do evil and learn to do well ' (679).

Of the unmixed or regular marriages of Friends there is need to write but little. They were carefully and prayerfully arranged, and they seem for the most part to have resulted in an unmixed blessing. As soon as the parties had laid, first before the Women's Meeting and then before the Men's Meeting, their intention of taking each other in marriage ' if the Lord permit,' and had produced their parents' or guardians' consent, two Friends from each Meeting were ' desired to make the necessary enquiries into the clearness of their conduct and conversation.' If one of the parties belonged to another Meeting, a certificate of ' freedom from engagements respecting marriage ' was required. Then, after an interval of waiting and watching, the intention was laid before the Meeting a second time, and if no objection was raised ' liberty was given to proceed' ; two Friends being deputed to see that the marriage, according to the simple ceremonial of the Society, was ' orderly conducted ' (853. 1. 187–9). It may be added that the Society from the outset testified against the marriage of first-cousins (703. 68). On account of their own ' remissness in early admonishing of them to desist in their intentions,' the Monthly Meeting had ' Condescended to permit ' a marriage of this nature between two of its more prominent members at Baldock in 1727; but ' this must not be pleaded as a precedent; and Friends are to take care for the future to inspect into all occurrences of the kind and labour to circumvent and put an end thereto in the beginning or first appearance.' As a further precaution the members were reminded of a Yearly Meeting Minute of 1709, which states that ' it is not safe to encourage the marriage even of Second Cousins in any of our meetings ' (xx) (679).

xx. In 1883 the marriage of first-cousins was at last allowed, though still strongly disapproved.

XI

The Testimony against War

Let us pass now by a not unnatural transition from love to war. Here, at any rate, the ancient and honourable testimony of Friends was faithfully maintained. Never did any difficulty arise in answering the Yearly Meeting query on this head (703. 143). And here is the common form of reply: 'Friends are faithful against bearing arms or being concerned in the Militia, in privateers or armed vessels, or dealing in prize-goods, except that a few have unwarily paid a rate for the Army; and one instance of being concerned in a Hitchin benefit club, which has some rules for providing substitutes for the Militia, and so inconsistent with any under our name to be thus concerned.' Some Friends did not feel the same scruple about paying commutation money, but when in 1778 John Lucas, who as Clerk to the Monthly Meeting should have set an example of suffering, was found to have paid £2 12s. 6d. for a substitute, he was called upon to resign his office and was soon afterwards disowned. The only other serious offence occurred in 1797, when Joseph Hagger 'enlisted in a Military Corps lately raised in the county called a provisional force of Cavalry, and took the Oath usual in such cases. This being in open violation of our ancient Christian Testimonies against War and Oaths, we deem it incumbent on us to testify against him and consider him no longer a member of our Society' (679).

It is interesting to observe the care that was taken to instruct and support Friends in what Barclay called 'the hardest and most perfect part of Christianity.' On the eleventh of the ninth month, 1745, when the Young Pretender was marching south after his victory at Prestonpans, there was 'received at this meeting a written half-sheet of paper, advising Friends how to act consistant with our principles in this critical conjuncture.' The makeshift served for that occasion, but the Society resolved to be more ready for the next. In 1746 it is recorded that 'Isaac Sharples brought in a book titled *Doctrine of the Quakers respecting fighting*, which is to be for the meeting's use. Cost 3½d. William Lucas hath it.' In 1762 the opinion of 'an eminent Counsellor' was taken respecting the Militia so that members might know exactly where they stood (679). For the future the Clerk was to

bring each Act of Parliament relating to recruiting and war service to the notice of the meeting. As soon as war was declared, the Lords-Lieutenant, the justices and the recruiting officers were to be told precisely what the attitude of Friends would be; and the King's officers were to know that they would pay no taxes for war purposes, not even when these were mixed up or disguised with other taxes. Friends were to have no part or lot with the Rejoicing Nights, so called, and were instructed to put out their lights on the celebration of any victory, shutter their windows, and stay within (703. 36). If it could be done without a breach of the peace, they were to make their voices heard against all such unchristian jubilations. In 1780, for example, they submitted an 'Address to the Magistrates of Hitchin on considering the unprecedented proceedings in this town by way of rejoicing on the news of the taking of Charlestown in South Carolina' (689). They were to be careful also 'not to seek or accept profit, or enrich themselves by the commerce and other circumstances dependent on war.' It was a popular charge against the Quakers of the period when this last advice was issued, 1798, that, being largely concerned in farming and milling and baking, they had secured a monopoly of the essential articles of food, and had run up the prices so that it made life difficult for the poor. On the occasion of the bread riots in Baldock in 1795, several Friends' shops had been sacked. Papers and pamphlets of denial had been widely circulated, but it was many years before this calumny died away (853. 2. 817).

One observes also in these accounts the care taken of those Friends who had suffered by their testimony against war. In 1746 £3 5s. was collected in the Hitchin Meeting 'towards the releafe of the poor Friends that suffered in the late rebellion' (658). From several later entries one learns that members were reimbursed the fines and losses incurred by them 'for refusing to convey soldieers baggage,' for 'windows broken in rejoicing nights,' and for 'distraints about the Militia.' By the nineteenth century, however, the testimony against war had undergone a process of development. Friends were thinking less about their own sufferings and more about those of the combatants, of dependents, of the world at large. In every recent war they have been mercifully engaged in relief or ambulance work; and their genius for organization has been everywhere acknowledged. James Hack Tuke of Hitchin was one of the seven Commissioners

GARDEN VIEW OF JAMES HACK TUKE'S HOUSE, THE CROFT

From a painting by James Lobley, 1873

on the Field entrusted with relief work in connection with the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 (853. 2. 755).; and there was hardly a member who did not help to bind up the wounds of the Great War of 1914–1918. As one of them said in writing to the author of this book, after grappling for two years in Holland with the human wreckage of the war: 'We are not despondent, never think that, though I sometimes wonder if anyone could glimpse the sum-total of misery caused here by the war and live. If Orpheus had stopped singing to the souls in hell, he would have become as one of them.'

However much absorbed in mitigating the ravages of war, Friends have never lost sight of their concern for its total abolition. In season and out of season, as 'faithful soldiers in the Lamb's warfare,' they have worked with this end in view; no amount of failure has made them falter or despair. Moreover, in their analysis of this deadly evil they have gone down to the very roots. When the Treaty of Ryswick was signed in 1697, John Crook, a leading member of the original Monthly Meeting, published a pamphlet entitled *The way to a Lasting Peace*, in which he urged, *that* war being ended, that another war should be waged to destroy men's corruptions and lusts out of which wars commonly proceed (851. 613). One after another the Ministers of this Meeting have proclaimed George Fox's gospel of peace, which is no other than the gospel of Jesus Christ: 'God is not the author of confusion but of peace'—It is for men 'to live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars'—'In the peaceable mind and spirit dwell, for the patient sufferer weareth the crown, and hath the victory at last, and not the hasty, aggravating, revengeful, killing and fighting spirit' (829. i. 68). Those who founded the Peace Society here after the Battle of Waterloo took as their motto the Yearly Meeting Minute of 1757, which is sealed with the very same spirit of truth: 'Let a holy care rest upon us to abide in that power, which gives dominion over the hopes and fears that arise from the concerns of an unstable world, and tend, as they are admitted into the mind, to lessen the trust on that Rock which is immovable' (703. 201). That holy care is still a main concern of this Society, which was never more alive than now to the need of preserving the integrity of its testimony against war. For, as Rufus Jones has finely said, 'if Friends are to challenge the whole world, and claim the right to continue in the ways of peace whilst everybody else is fighting,

they must reveal the fact that they are worthy of peace, and that they bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus ' (853. 718).

XII

The Queries concerning Trade

No less care was taken by the Society to preserve its members from the ' contagion of the world's slow stain '; the contaminations of public life; the snares and perils of trade. Of the twofold dangers which Fox himself had foreseen in those who professed truth, one was ' of old people's going into earthly things.' It was a lasting ' concern upon his spirit,' and upon that of the Yearly Meetings which carried on his work. ' Circumscribed even as we are more than many,' they say in a letter of advice, ' it is not unusual in our pursuit of the things of this life for our gain and our convenience to clash with our testimony ' (703. 198). And again, ' We do not condemn industry, which we believe to be not only praiseworthy but indispensable. It is the desire of great things, and the engrossment of time and attention from which we desire that all our dear Friends may be redeemed ' (703. 200). The year in which Hitchin Monthly Meeting was set up, 1688, another letter of more direct advice was received from Yearly Meeting: ' Advised that none launch into worldly trading and worldly business beyond what they can manage honourably and with reputation; so that they may keep their words with all men, that their yea may prove yea indeed, and their nay, nay: and that they use few words in their dealings, lest they bring dishonour to the truth ' (703. 195). It was by their direction, too, that the paper which Fox had written in 1661, *The Line of Righteousness and Justice stretched forth over all Merchants*, was to be read in Meeting every year (851. 561).

There were queries also upon which they required to be satisfied: ' Are Friends just in their dealings and punctual in fulfilling their engagements? ' ' Do Friends take care to settle their Affairs in due time by wills or otherwise? Do none overcharge themselves with Business to the hindrance of their Service? Do you stand clear in our Testimony against defrauding the King of his Customs, Duties or Excise, or in dealing in goods suspected to be run? ' (703. 143). The ' yea ' of the Hitchin

Meeting to these interrogations has never to be 'nay,' 'except in the case of Stamps for Receipts, in which Friends do not yet stand clear.' More and more as time went on the Ministers, breaking away from traditional Quietism, gave practical expression to the same concern. 'The Gospel is good for the life that now is as well as for the life to come.' They were to see to it that the word of a Friend had more value than a Merchant's bond. 'I believe Quakerism to be Christianity received into the heart,' said Esther Seebohm, 'and suffered so to operate there as to purify the springs of action, and thus to influence all the conduct of the life' (712. N.S. 24. 221). 'For many years,' protested Thomas Shillitoe, a leading Hitchin Minister, of whom more will be said anon, 'for many years I have esteemed it a reproach to such professing Christians as we are, when any of our members have left behind them large sums of money of their own accumulation. O what a cloud has it brought over the very best actions, however conspicuous they may have stood in Society' (743. 1. 216).

Even worse is that 'accumulation for the sake of accumulation in order that parents may enable their children to make a display, a figure of elegance in the world. O my friends, I go mourning on my way under a powerful sense hereof.' He would have them go back to the austerity of the first Friends, who 'were mercifully redeemed from the world and its spirit, and were enabled to count all things appertaining to this life but as dross and dung, so that they might win Christ.' For his own part, he was not slow to practise what he preached. Early in his career he surrendered his leasehold property into the hands of his landlord because he felt that the covenants were an encumbrance to the free course of his spirit (743. 1. 74). Again, in 1821, before leaving for his long mission to Holland, Norway, Germany and France, duty pointed to his parting with his cottage and furniture at Hitchin. 'My cottage at Highbury, Hitchin, had possessed many charms; I had laboured and toiled to make it a comfortable abode for our declining years, hoping to have kept it for our residence, until we were taken to the house appointed for all living. Nature had many strugglings to endure before it made that free-will offering called for; but, believing it to be the most effectual way to have my mind freed from worldly cares, I yielded. Feeling thus loosened from this earthly shackle, I made the necessary preparations for my journey' (743. 1. 230).

Again and again in Hitchin Monthly Meeting Shillitoe and

other judicious Ministers warned Friends against 'hazardous enterprises,' and other 'pernicious practices of raising and circulating fictitious kinds of paper credit' (703. 196–7). They were to refrain from being concerned in lotteries (xxi) or in illegal dealings in the Government securities, 'which is a species of gaming,' or in the 'vile and wicked practices of stock-jobbing and bubbles' (703. 54). It was advisable for each member to have 'an annual inspection into his affairs.' Those who kept shops must observe the honourable custom of Friends and have 'fixed prices' for their goods. There must be no 'acceptance of gratuities, no purchasing on credit.' Whenever possible Friends should trade with their own people. At all cost, the 'broad character of covetousness,' prevailing in the outer world of business, must be avoided. There must be nothing in short but 'plain and straightforward dealing' (703. 195–200).

Certainly the Overseers of Hitchin Meeting showed themselves severe and competent dealers. They made a most judicious arrangement with the landlord of the Swan, whereby, in consideration of his being appointed the sole house for the purpose, Friends' horses were put up at half the customary cost: 5d. per night at grass, or 7d. with hay and corn. They persuaded one Peirce to sweep the Quakers' Alley for only half a crown the quarter. They cut the hedge of the burial-ground themselves, sooner than pay the exorbitant charge demanded. They took 10s. from George Paternoster for putting three sheep and four lambs into the same for five months, and proposed to double the rent when he put in a few more (658). But not all the members were fired by their thrifty example. The affairs of William Manns, 1772, are found 'to be in a perplexed and disagreeable situation,' and two Friends are 'desired to visit him therefor and advise him as they may see necessary, in order that there may be a fair and just distribution of his effects to his creditors.' A testimony has to issue against John Brown in 1805, 'for having dishonourably fallen into insolvent circumstances'; and in 1868 one of the Elders has to be disciplined 'for unwise and unwarrantable speculation in oil, whereby he failed to meet his pecuniary engagements' (679).

xxi. As a young man Thomas Shillitoe gave up a profitable clerkship in a bank because he was expected to purchase lottery tickets for country correspondents.

XIII

Liberality and Public Spirit

There are perhaps ten failures recorded amongst Hitchin Friends in the course of their history. The great majority trod in the paths of carefulness, and prospered, some modestly, and some exceedingly. Indeed, Shillitoe accused them of failure of another kind: 'They have obeyed all the commandments of the Gospel, save that one great command about laying up treasures' (743. 1. 216). Still, they were not extravagant, and what little money they spent they laid out wisely; one might even say liberally.

The books of record are full of their benefactions. The greater part goes back, of course, to their own people. There are the sick and poor of the Meeting to be provided for. Some receive weekly doles from a fund supplied by the bequests of Friends who were well to do, e.g. Elizabeth Lucas, who by her will, dated 1754, gave 'the sum of £5 to be distributed amongst the poor belonging to the Meeting House of Dissenters called Quakers situate at Hitchin.' Some are provided for privately by prospering Friends. William Lucas's household account books are full of alms-giving, which, like a true Quaker, he hides from the sight of men. To hide them more carefully he enters them in French: '1794. To Cash *don un ami suffrisant*, £2 2s. 0d.'

Some hopeless cases are maintained in the Friends' own Workhouse, and their children are apprenticed 'upon liking' to Quaker masters. William Hine and James Gripper, being on probation as apprentices, indulge in 'evil communications and lewd conduct,' and have to be placed elsewhere (679). Those 'distempered and discomposed' Friends who have lost their reason are sent to the York Retreat. The orphan children are dispatched for their 'guarded education' to Friends' Schools at Ackworth and Sibford; or a place is found for them in Abbott's, or Woodhead's, or Isaac Brown's academies at Hitchin. Along with subscriptions to all these, one lights upon exotic items, and still more generous gifts, to 'the improvement and civilization of the Indian Natives in North America,' and 'for the support of fugitive slaves' (658).

It has been charged against most Nonconforming bodies that, whilst rigorous enough in the affairs of their little Bethels and

mightily concerned about the New Jerusalem, they have not troubled overmuch about the towns in which they lived. 'Here,' they have declared, 'is no abiding city. We are sojourners as were our fathers before us in a strange land.' That could not truthfully be said about the Quakers. In this parish, at any rate, they were numerous enough and rich enough to count; at one time they were not so much a select body as the community itself. As bankers, as philanthropists, as landowners, their money, their charity, their enterprise were behind everything that was. The

A HITCHIN BEGGAR MAN

eighteenth-century Hitchin was brought up in their leading-strings. It is not often remembered to their credit nowadays, but it was they who founded the hospitals, the libraries, the friendly societies, the penny savings banks; they who gave land for new roads and open spaces; they who projected the Corn Exchange (xxii) and the Old Town Hall. So closely, indeed, did

xxii. The architect of this unsightly building was the well-known Quaker William Beck, whose grandfather, Thomas Barton Beck, lived at Wratten Cottage, Hitchin.

they identify themselves with the development of Hitchin that it became like unto themselves. To this day, as strangers go about the streets, the thought instinctively rises: 'How prim, old-fashioned and Quakerly a town.'

One would incline to say, nevertheless, that it is in their concern for the poor that Friends have rendered the most valued service. By their habit of thrift, their practical bent of mind, and their spiritual unity with those in trouble they acquired just the qualities that tell. It was not their way 'to whine about metaphysical distresses, when there was so much want and hunger in the world.' And, if one may borrow another passage out of the *Posthuma Christiana*, p. 23, of William Crouch, an early Quaker, of London, 'they sat not still untill the cry of the poor came to their houses; but when they did suppose or discern a want of help, their charity led them to enquire into their conditions and minister to their necessities.' After all, they had as a Society been specially devoted to this work. 'It is desired,' runs an early minute of 1696, 'that such among the Friends as are endowed with plenty of outward substance be timely and tenderly advised to do good therewith in their day and generation, especially with regard to the poor; that the tokens of your charity may be good precedents to generations to come' (703. 56). One after another the testimonies of Hitchin Friends show that this counsel has had its perfect way. What is certified of Mary Laundy in 1768 might be certified of all: 'Very exemplary and inoffensive in her life and conversation, she hath been a diligent and faithful Labourer amongst us as long as ability of Body did permit; for, far from being Tinctured with Covetousness, too often the attendant of old age, she cheerfully and liberally contributed to the relief of the Necessitous both in her own and in other Societies' (656. 2. 331).

XIV

Plainness of Living

Having studied the advices to Friends in trade and public affairs, we may now consider those which fenced in their private lives. 'If we as a people are to bear a sufficient testimony to the pure principle of light and life,' declared Shillitoe, 'we must be redeemed not only from the treasures of the world, but also from its pleasures' (743. 1. 208). He was thinking of the

Yearly Meeting Advice of 1724, which enjoined Friends 'to content themselves with such a plain way and manner of living as is most conducive to that tranquillity of mind that is requisite to a religious conduct through this troublesome world.' But the Queries are still more searching and specific. 'Do Friends endeavour by example and precept to train up their children, servants, and those under their care in a religious life and conversation, consistent with our Christian profession, in the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel?' 'Are Friends careful to avoid all vain sports and places of diversion, gaming, all unnecessary frequenting of taverns and other public houses, and other intemperance?' (703. 143). As one lukewarm Hitchin member said: 'It is all warning and prohibition; everything is "nay" and never "yea."' It reminded him of Phoebe Lucas, who declined no less than seventeen eligible offers of marriage, because she had lost the capacity of saying 'Yea' (647. 3).

So with the rest of them. They were always declining, declining. They were told they must not use 'unbecoming gestures in cringing and bowing the body by way of salutation' (703. 21). They must not say 'you' to a mere, particular person, 'contrary to the pure, plain and simple language of truth,' but 'thee and thou.' They must not yield the honour of the hat to men, whatever their rank and position; these titled and decorated creatures are as nothing in the sight of God. They must hold themselves free from superstition in the calling of the days of the week after the idolatrous practice of their Saxon ancestors, and the months of the year after that of the Romans (703. 30–6). They must not suffer romances, play-books and other vain and idle pamphlets in their houses; such tend to corrupt the minds of youth (703. 11). In choosing or building their houses they must avoid 'running into high, lofty fabrics to gratify a proud and curious mind.' Their furniture should be free of garnishings and ornamental work. Twisted banisters, swelling chimney-pieces, large-mouldings or finishings of panel, veneered cabinets, large looking-glasses, curtains with valences, and all 'curious or nice things' were to be 'done away.' In their gardens, too, they must take heed 'against superfluity and too great niceness; instead of keeping to plainness and the serviceable part' (851. 507–510). At marriages they are warned to avoid all 'running into excessive, sumptuous, and costly entertainments'; and at funerals, 'the

vain custom of wearing or giving mourning, and all extravagant expenses about the interment of the dead' (703. 64. 116). Those who judge it to be their duty to vote at elections are to perform their office orderly and then depart; 'not behaving themselves unseemly,' as did Joseph Tranter of Hitchin Meeting, who in 1790 was 'put under dealing' for 'suffering himself to be carried about the town on men's shoulders and joining others in the confused practices of such times' (679).

'The salvation of the world,' observed Baxter, 'doth not lie upon these silly cavils' (831. 496). But though the world has come to smile at these characteristics of the Friends, a wise man will not smile but endeavour to understand. Not unlikely he will come in the end to agree with Rufus Jones that 'it was in its origin not an outward rule impressed but an inner life expressed,' and with W. C. Braithwaite that 'under the conditions of that age the main message of Friends could not have been uttered in its purity and force if they had shrunk from giving it fearless application to these parts of life' (831. 495). In 1860 the clause in the fourth query respecting plainness in speech, behaviour and apparel was omitted (853. 2. 951); and one after another the Society in its wisdom has abandoned the remaining singularities of Friends (xxiii). Not always with the concurrence of the older school of its members. Thomas Shillitoe, for example, who was always praising the pure principle and strict demeanour of the early Friends, could not bear that one jot or tittle of their testimony should be taken away. If anything he was for adding to it; for he had a way of applying the general advices of Yearly Meeting to all sorts of particular cases for which they were never intended. He could prove that it was an infringement of George Fox's teaching to take a pinch of snuff. It followed from another chapter and verse that we must 'take up the cross and avoid reading political publications and newspapers; keep that ear closed which will be itching to hear the news of the day. It is

xxiii. Except, perhaps, in its refusal to recognize those once distinguished, and now meaningless, titles of 'Mr.' and 'Esquire'; a wholesome addiction to plainness, which I also have adopted throughout this *History*; not without rebuke from some who found themselves deprived of their usual dignity in my List of Subscribers. I was pleased to see how particular William Lucas of Hitchin was in requiring to be called by his name and nothing but his name. In 1831, when he received a business letter from one John Iliffe with an 'Esquire' after his name, he erased the offending title from the envelope and noted in his reply: 'As a common tradesman I have no pretensions to the title of Esquire.'

the only way for us to experience our minds to be preserved tranquil amongst all the turnings and over-turnings that may be permitted to take place, when the measure of iniquity may be filled up.' This was a cross too hard for some to bear. They dearly liked their papers. It was essential, urged those of them in trade, to have these 'channels of information' (743. 1. 224). And were they to be condemned if, like worthy Edward Pease, they succumbed now and then to the temptation of reading *The Illustrated London News*, 'one of the attractive fascinations of the present time,' 1851 (824. 297). It was Shillitoe again who reproved the younger Friends for their unsanctified love of music and their 'itch' in particular to play the piano. Had not Fox declared that music was 'almost as dangerous as gunpowder'? Why, then, play with it? At best the piano was but a tinkling cymbal, and at the worst it was too grievous to be borne. In spite of the old man's jeremiads, however, the younger Friends would have their way. Alice Moule, daughter of Oswald Foster, has described to the author of this book how she was once taken on tiptoe to the top of Joseph Lucas's house by one of the younger generation and there secretly shown the first piano of the Hitchin Friends, and allowed to listen for a brief while to its unholy music. 'Old Joe,' as he was called, did not even know of its existence (647. 5).

XV

Restraints on Recreation

The restraints on 'recreation and apparel' are interesting enough to be considered separately; for, though superficially concerned with 'petty cavils,' they have their source in the deeper issues of life. The recreations allowed by the Society of Friends are of the kind that have been described as 'calm and gentle, and not more full of relaxation than void of fury.' In practice there was a distinction to be drawn between recreation and diversion. Diversion was of the Devil. In a tract entitled *Sentiments of Pious and Eminent Persons on the Pernicious Tendency of Dramatic Entertainments and other Vain Amusements*, which was circulated amongst the Hitchin members in 1815, William Law (xxiv) is commended for his plain speaking on this point:

xxiv. For his association and co-operation with the Society see Stephen Hobhouse's *William Law and Eighteenth-Century Quakerism*, 1927.

THOMAS SHILLITOE PREACHING OUTSIDE A GIN-SHOP AT SMITHFIELD, DUBLIN, 1811

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

'Though we only call them diversions, they do the whole work of idolatry and infidelity, and fill people with so much blindness and hardness of heart, that they neither live by wisdom, nor feel the want of it, but are content to play away their lives with scarce any attention to the approaching scenes of death, judgment, and eternity.' In their witness against diversion the Hitchin ministers were no less clear. This vale of tears, which was to some a playing-field and to others a battle-ground, was to them a place for sufferings. 'Why,' asks Shillitoe of a minister in another Society, 'why do you sew pillows under the arms of your congregation and cry Peace, peace, when there is no peace?' (743. 1. 236). For his own part he spurned and despised the garnishings of life, its delicacies and its diversions. He could sleep soundly enough on the bare earth without the aid of pillows; he found no affliction in a diet of bread and water. When he sat down in the drinking-houses of Dublin in 1811, he hungered and thirsted for the signs of righteousness in those around him, but not for anything else. They looked on him and were affronted. 'Taking their seats by me, they called for beer, and declared I should not leave the room until I drank with them; on my refusing, they called for spirits; on my refusing to take their spirits, one of them called for bacon, saying he would know who I was; whether I could eat swine's flesh; bawling out, trembling, and looking pale with anger, he demanded to know my mission for going about to try to convert the people, and if I had been ordained.' At another tavern 'a big dirty-looking man, who was taking his pint of beer at the bar, after filling his mouth with the beer, squirted in my face, telling me to take that for Jesus Christ's sake' (743. 132, 147). The same unflinching testimony was borne by Mercy Ransom, who had laboured in the vilest quarters of London, and who knew the vicious pleasures of that city through and through. It is in these words she sums up the whole matter in 1820: 'I have long seen that upon all earthly enjoyments this inscription is written, "They shall fail"' (714. 78).

How, then, were Friends to exercise their bodies and relax their minds? That was the question. Not in hunting (xxv)

xxv. Clarkson, in his *Portraiture of the Christian Profession and Practice of the Society of Friends*, has a word to say about hunting: 'It has been a matter of astonishment to some how men who have the powers of reason can waste their time in galloping after dogs in a wild and tumultuous manner, to the detriment often of their neighbours and to the hazard of their own lives' (Edn. 1847, p. 36).

or in shooting, most assuredly: ' The leisure of those whom Providence hath permitted to have a competence of worldly goods is but ill filled up with such amusements. Let our leisure rather be employed in serving our neighbours, and not in destroying the creatures of God for our amusement.' So runs a Yearly Meeting Minute of 1795 (703. 25). Still less in play-houses and theatres: ' Those nurseries of debauchery and wickedness are the burden and grief of the sober part of other Societies, as well as of our own '; and again: ' May we never be imposed on by the common but delusive sentiment that literary merit and accurate knowledge of the human heart can atone for the fatal wounds which innocence, delicacy, and religion too frequently suffer from these performances ' (703. 217). Not in horse-racing either. This had been the ruin of John Morris of Hitchin Meeting in 1807: ' So far has he deviated from the plain, self-denying practice of our Christian Profession and entered into the Spirit of the World, as to join therewith in divers of its vain customs and amusements, such as attending places of diversion such as Horse-Racing and other insnaring things.' Morris admitted going to races, ' but as there was no gaming practised thought they were harmless. . . . As he felt no uneasiness in attending places of public diversion he should not refrain therefrom.' He was accordingly cast out (679). Nor might they ' draw out their minds into the foolish and wicked pastimes with which this age aboundeth, particularly balls ' (703. 217). In an especial manner ' the beloved youth are urged to curb inordinate desires in their infancy, when the victory will be more easy; but, if ye shrink from the conflict or assign the victory to the tempter, ye may be unable to resist in your further progress through life temptations which in the fresh morning of your day ye would have held in abhorrence ' (703. 219).

XVI

Innocent Divertisements

By the process of elimination we are coming to see what are those recreations which, in Robert Barclay's test, ' do not disagree with Christian silence, gravity and sobriety.' According to his notion, the ' innocent divertisements which may sufficiently serve for relaxation of the mind ' are these: ' Such as for Friends to visit one another; to hear or read history; to speak soberly of the present or past transactions; to follow after gardening; to use

geometrical and mathematical experiments, and such other things of this nature' (645. 370). It will be noticed that Barclay is not much concerned over Brother Ass the Body, though in the 'busy idleness of life in gardens' (xxvi) he could be kept out of mischief. Mercy Ransom is far more practical and stern. According to Samuel Scott, who listened to her at Meeting on the thirteenth, 5th mo. 1781, 'she recommended occupations which were

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diligently and prosperously practised by our worthy ancestors, *viz.* digging and begging: a lively and pertinent opening, on which she was enlarged with strength and propriety' (708. 30). But it was not until 1883 that the Society recognized 'the Christian duty of securing for ourselves and our children a due measure of bodily

xxvi. Hannah Sewell has a sly hit at Quaker gardening in a letter written in 1857 from the house she had just taken at Hitchin: 'I had a long, *low* time in the garden,' she says, 'before I could come at anything like a settlement.'

exercise, without which neither our physical nor mental faculties can be preserved in a healthy condition' (858. 85). But in the interval the members had been extending the list of 'innocent divertisements' on their own account. Some had taken to cutting silhouettes; some had taken to chess; some had taken to bowls, a game formerly denounced by Friends as though it were the pastime of habitual drunkards. Others went afoot down the green lanes of pleasant Hertfordshire. They were great walkers; Thomas Shillitoe thought nothing of thirty and forty miles a day. Moreover, in walking they need waste no time, for each Friend after the bent of his own mind could botanize, geologize, or ornithologize as he journeyed along. Some ventured farther afield. In 1812 Joshua Ransom and Richard Day pilgrimaged to Swarthmoor Hall, that they might see before they died 'the two ebony bedposts, the dish and lock of hair belonging to George Fox'—a strangely superstitious practice for these unsuperstitious men, but they got some needful exercise thereby. Others, including the Lucas family, were so far infected with the spirit of the world as to visit Brighton, then known as Brighthelmstone, every year; 'a place,' as described by Richard Beck, who married Rachel Lucas, 'of a great many genteel people walking backwards and forwards, making it a sort of Parade' (809. 29). But, for the most part, Friends did not approve this walking to and fro upon the earth. They and their fathers before them had held with Pascal that all man's troubles arose from his not being able to keep quiet in a room. 'All the glory I pretend in my life,' said Montaigne, 'is that I have lived quietly.' Here again they agreed, though it gave them no occasion for glory. Instead of 'running into company' and scattering their lives at random, they stayed at home in 'quiet collectedness.' By strict care and domestic discipline they studied to keep in their private houses the same stillness and calm that pervaded their Meeting-houses. What Penn called the 'noisy crowd and incumbering Hurry of the world' was not suffered to intrude. Such was their attitude to life; and it was one which as far back as 1672 the Yearly Meeting in its Epistle had approved: 'So keep every one of ye in the peaceable wisdom, and out of all extremes and whirlings, which tend to draw out and unsettle people's minds.' If their young men and their maidens could not live by peaceable wisdom alone; if recreation there must be, was there not plenty of the homelier sort? A water-colour painting, it maybe, to work up from a rough sketch

at Oughton Head or Redcoats Green (xxvii); an essay on *The Pleasures of Retirement* for the Hitchin Essay Society; an acrostic to devise for the Hitchin Acrostic Club. It was essential each evening that the day's diary should be written up, and written up it was. In Richard Beck's diary are several amusing entries which throw additional light on the recreations of the Friends, e.g. ' Forfeits, 8s., paid to Rachel Lucas for speaking ungrammatically *Thee* instead of *Thou* ' (809. 69). It appears from another diary that, though Rachel Lucas was a strict grammarian, she was something more. Now and then she indulged in a bout of English poetry—the poetry, that is to say, of the safer sort, so safe that it is with searching of heart that she accepts a copy of Thomson's *Seasons* in 1818 (809. 66). Even more austere are the recreations of Ann Bowly. In the prospectus of the school which she carried on before her marriage to William Lucas, it is advertised, 1795, that ' Geography is to be introduced as an amusement ' (809. 81). Of all these house-abiding pleasures, however, there was none so social or well pleasing in the sight of Quakers as the drinking of tea, that blessed beverage which has neither the arrogance of wine, nor the self-consciousness of coffee, nor the simpering innocence of cocoa. Blessed be tea, whose gracious influence can so wondrously enliven the intellect and stimulate the flow of soul. Blessed be tea that can lure even a Quaker from his taciturnity and silence, revive old memories and tender sayings, knit families and friends together, and consecrate with hallowed intercourse the evening hour (xxviii).

xxvii. This genteel accomplishment, so characteristic of the eighteenth century, was not widely taken up by Friends because, after centuries of intermarriage and of opposition to the Fine Arts, they were becoming colour-blind. In his *Inquiries into the Human Faculty*, 1883, p. 47, Francis Galton, himself descended from a family of Friends, states that colour-blindness is nearly twice as prevalent amongst their Society as amongst the rest of the community, the proportion being as 5·9 to 3·5 per cent. See also the *Trans. Ophthalmological Soc.*, 1881, p. 198. The quality of the fine work produced by Samuel Lucas the elder and Samuel Lucas the younger lies not so much in its colour as in its drawing and design. It should be added that Friends were careful to make no display of ' the fine and masterly productions of the painter's art.' ' There are,' says Clarkson, ' a few amateurs amongst them who have a number and variety of prints in their possession. But these appear chiefly in collections bound together in books or preserved in portfolios, and not in frames as ornamental furniture for their rooms ' (*Portraiture of the Christian Profession and Practices of the Society of Friends.* Edn. 1847, p. 77).

xxviii. In Friends House Library there is a *Satyrical Poem* in manuscript by one John Sutcliffe, 1717, which has these attractive sub-titles: *The Quakers' Tea Table Overthrown, The Tea-table Spilt,* and *The China-ware Broken.*

Not all the Ministers and visiting Friends upheld a testimony as strong as this. It is charged against Thomas Story, who visited the Hitchin Meeting so often, that he was 'a little too fine and modish,' particularly as to his hat and long hair; and so gave countenance to others to wear 'curled and powdered hair, flourishing wigs, long cravats, unnecessary folds in their coats, fashionable sleeves and cuts of several kinds, cocks and strings in their hats, with such-like things after the modes of the world' (851. 509). With Shillitoe, of course, there was no 'cowardly compliance,' no 'balking of testimony.' He was, as ever, on the side of the angels, and incidentally on the side of the Apostle Paul, who adjured the fair but weaker sex 'to adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but with good works' (1 *Timothy* 2. 9–10) (xxxiii). If the 'very ill example to our observing youth' was to be ended, said Shillitoe, their elders must put aside their 'Babylonish garments' and dress in a 'plain home manner' (743. 1. 38).

Certainly no one would accuse him of extravagance in this respect. Even when he travelled as Minister abroad, and suffered rough usage almost daily at the hands of the ungodly, he considered one suit to be enough. In 1821 he was in Copenhagen, and by the influence of the Prime Minister was promised an interview with the King. 'Count S——,' he says, 'looking rather earnestly at me, said, "You do not mean to appear before the King in those clothes, do you?"; the breaking of my bottle of chocolate, independent of my clothes being very much worn, had given them a greasy appearance. I told him I had no others

cold weather.' But it is clear that smoking was strongly discountenanced amongst Friends. Benjamin Lay of Colchester, 1681–1759, an eccentric Minister, who visited Hitchin in 1715, is said on one occasion to have appeared at Yearly Meeting with three long pipes stuck in his bosom. As the meeting was ending he 'rose and dashed one pipe down amongst the ministers on the men's side, another amongst the women, and the third amongst the common people; as much as to say they were all of one piece in their neglect of this branch of their testimony.' Not until the nineteenth century can you find any Apology on behalf of smoking in the Society. See Samuel Bevan's *To all who smoke! a few words in defence of Tobacco; or a Plea for the Pipe*, 1857. 'The abstinence from tobacco,' comments Dr. Norman Penney on this note, 'really came in with the evangelical period. Prior to that, many Friends smoked, including women Ministers.'

xxxiii. Women Friends found the apostle rather a nuisance. He was always being quoted at them. 'Paul may be of that opinion,' remarked Margaret Pike on one occasion, 'but thou knows Paul was not a Friend.'

THOMAS SHILLITOE IN HIS RUSSIAN CLOTHES

From a sketch by Samuel Lucas

with me, but I would endeavour to smarten myself, at which he smiled, and so the subject closed. . . . That same evening I set to work and did my best in cleaning and brushing my clothes and hat, which was much in the same train as my clothes ' (743. 1. 291). As a rule, however, Shillitoe left these ' smartenings up ' to his wife, whom he visited in the rare and brief intervals of his incessant ministry. Though somewhat phlegmatic, she was a good manager and practical in all her ways. The story is often told in Hitchin how Shillitoe, having brooded by himself for months over the project of his longest European mission, at length laid his concern suddenly and unexpectedly before Hitchin Monthly Meeting. Their approval being obtained, he then for the first time informed his wife that he would be absent for a year and possibly for two. She was silent for a considerable time and then observed: ' And how many shirts wilt thou require? '

XVIII

Restraints on the Vanity of Women

But men were in no danger of taking pride in their apparel, or of leading others astray. If they were not then, most certainly they are now, the worst apparelled of all the creatures God has made. As George Fox and Robert Barclay saw, it was not the men, but the daughters of men, who were most in danger. It was they who were to be saved from the tyranny of an ever-changing fashion. It was they who had to be forbidden ' the use of ribands and lace, painting the face and plaiting the hair, which are the fruits of the fallen, lustful, and corrupt nature.' It was they, above all, who had the power with these allurements to lead mere men astray. The very existence of the other sex, as Bonaventura had remarked, is a temptation permitted by God in His inscrutable Providence; and that experienced Saint in his catalogue of temptations—' the curious listening to news and musical instruments, the sight of fair things and the contemplation of delectable things with inordinateness of affection ' —had not overlooked the ' curious gazing on women.' ' Away then,' says Fox in 1669, ' away with your skimming-dish hats and your unnecessary buttons. . . . And away with your long slit yokes . . . and short sleeves . . . and flying scarves on your back ' (851. 511). ' Away,' say those who sit afterwards in

the seats of authority, away with your 'spangled or speckled aprons,' 1689 (xxxiv); away with your 'figured and gaudy stuffs'; away with your 'wide-sleeved mantles, cross-laces and long trains,' 1706; away with your 'knotted handkerchiefs, coloured in orange and red,' 1710; away with your 'quilted petticoats, your red-heeled shoes, your scarlet or purple stockings and petticoats made short to expose 'em'; and 'all else that the judgment of Truth is gone out against,' 1720 (851. 509. 515).

In the diaries and letters of Mercy Ransom, 1728–1811, a minister whose 'poor, worn-out tabernacle was dropped into the grave' just before Shillitoe came to Hitchin, you can almost see the struggle going on between the natural woman with her love of pretty things and 'that of God in her' which was concerned only 'to centre down into abasement and nothingness' (842). She was as a girl a pattern little Quaker: 'I remember,' she writes down under the year 1749, 'when we went to pay our first visit to Cousin Jeremiah Owen's wife, notwithstanding the gaiety and grandeur which appear'd in her dress and Equipage, with which our eyes could not but be somewhat taken up, a certain passage of Scripture seemed to live in my mind in a particular manner, to wit what David says, "One hour in the presence of God is better then a thousand anywhere else"' (714. 10). Yet the woman in her was not dead but sleeping. Just as the sampler which she worked in childhood has more choiceness and refinement about it than is commonly observed, so even in 'the somber habits of humility' which her conscience constrained her to wear in later years there is a richness and quality of material, a 'handsome simplicity' as Jane Austen would have said, which almost compensates for the lack of colour. Moreover, like other young Quakeresses of the time, she possessed the indescribable art of putting on the regulation bonnet in such a way as to look positively becoming. Nor were its recesses ever so deep as to hinder the eyes 'from being somewhat taken

xxxiv. Aprons were to be worn, but must be fashioned of cloth, not silk, and of green or blue or other sober colours, not white. Most of the aprons depicted in the original of the picture of Gracechurch Meeting prefixed to this chapter are green. The green apron, as a badge of Quakerism, appears in many a satire of the eighteenth century:—

'When she to silent meeting comes,
With apron green before her,
She simpers so like muffle plums,
'Twould make a Jew adore her' (860. 350).

up ' with the attractive world outside. Her Chippendale chairs, on which the writer of this book has sat, her chests, the silver apple-scoop she gave to Mercy Green, her other trinkets, have all of them an unsanctified air of elegance about them. They speak of her to this day, just as she often spoke of them (714. 16). To a letter of religious encouragement which she wrote to her niece, Susanna Crafton, in 1771, she adds a postscript, dwelling with evident satisfaction on her ' gold buttons,' which had just come back from being repaired (xxxv). In the book of recipes which she compiled, along with instruction how to make a ' Quaking pudding ' and ' Aunt Ransom's way for Hams,' there is, *horribile dictu*, a recipe for lip-salve (xxxvi) (714. 16).

But less and less, as her religious experience develops, are the eyes permitted to wander from the safe seclusion of that bonnet. She was slowly coming to agree with the advice which Samuel Spavold was ever dinning into Friends' ears at the Hitchin Meeting: ' We want to be more inward; the Lord's people are an inward people ' (809. 75). So far as clothes were concerned, the cost of anything superfluous began to lie uneasily upon her conscience. She had worked for years in the Hitchin slums and she had learned how the poor lived. How true, how sadly true was that adage of ' our worthy elder William Penn ': ' The

xxxv. One may charitably assume that these gold buttons were not purchased but inherited by her, and worn not in vanity but out of remembrance. In 1742 Mary Ransom had inherited a ' pair of silver buttons ' under the will of Lydia Ward, and had not scrupled to appear in them at Meeting. In 1746 John Woolman received ' a pair of gold buttons ' as a legacy and had no qualms about accepting the bequest. A conflict of mind is occasionally apparent, however. Benjamin Lucas, for example, who had overcome the doubts he once held about the possession of gold and silver articles of virtu and ornaments of dress experienced some uneasiness about the transmission of them to his descendants. When he came to make his will in 1766 he compromised with his conscience by bequeathing with each piece of silver a book of devotion that might counteract any possible infection of worldliness: ' To my sister Rebecca my silver shoe-buckles and Hervey's *Meditations*.' In December 1927 Miss A. M. Lucas, Major R. B. Lucas and I opened a drawer in the home of the Lucas family at Wratten, Hitchin, and discovered many of its trinkets of the eighteenth century. A delightful box of vanities: silver spoons from Cromwell's time, with the initials of the original owner engraved, silver buckles, watches and cheese-tasters, snuff-boxes with the snuff still inside them, mourning rings, gold-mounted scent bottles, lockets and chains, ivory combs, primitive shaving-brushes, fobs and seals. Some of the seals bore the device of a fox, or that of Socrates. Others, as if to mitigate the luxurious effect of the gold setting, were cut with the severe features of Penington and Fox.

xxxvi. T. Edmund Harvey very reasonably remarks: ' May not the lip-salve have been an innocent ointment for chapped lips?'

very trimming of the vain world would clothe all the naked one' (xxxvii). In the end, and after many a conflict, the natural woman was subdued, and 'that of God' in her prevailed. Before she died she was enabled to say with John Crook, 'that ancient servant of the Lord' who in his unregenerate days had been a seller of lace: 'When the mind thinks nothing, when the soul coveteth nothing, and when the body acteth nothing contrary to the will of God, this is perfect sanctification' (851. 475, 516).

When William Forster made an 'Excursion' to Hitchin in 1778 he found no trace of this sanctification amongst the other women Friends. He had occasion to mourn over their worldliness: 'Rudd Wheeler's second daughter,' he writes to his sister Tabitha on the 18th of the 2nd month, 'showed by her manner of walking, sitting and talking that she had seen the Metropolis . . . she wears a dark bonnet and cloke which in their plain meeting looked, if not gay, singular. . . . Betsy Lister is not at all improved in dress or person, tho' [she] attempts to set it off by a ridiculous head-dress not at all genteel, and particularly disagreeable in her, a high head sufficiently powdered, a frightful cap with Lappets under her chin sets off her face to Admiration yet not respect.'

In her lifetime Mercy Ransom also had deplored the weakening of Friends' witness against pride of apparel. After her death in 1811 the decline became more marked. The Yearly Meeting of 1845, in its Epistle, issued a last warning against 'those progressive deviations from simplicity of dress and that gradual assimilation with the world, which as we believe render it additionally difficult to resist its customs in this particular' (853. 176); and then in 1860, as has been noted, the query respecting plainness of apparel was abandoned. In these degenerate days, with no 'garb or shibboleth' to guide, it is no longer possible to distinguish a Quaker from any other son of Adam. In his *Journal* Shillitoe sums up the matter with a telling story. There was a judge in America, he says, into whose court came a Quaker to affirm and give evidence. The man was dressed like the other witnesses in fashionable clothes. 'Are you a Quaker?' asked the judge in surprise. 'Yes,' replied the witness. 'Do

xxxvii. *Some Fruits of Solitude in Reflections and Maxims* (1693), Pt. 1, No. 67 (in some editions, 73). In 1776, Goldsmith (*Vicar of Wakefield*) wrote: 'The nakedness of the indigent world may be clothed from the trimmings of the vain.'

you really belong to that Church or Society?' urged the judge. 'Yes,' he repeated. Then after a little pause the judge observed: 'The time was, when the members of your Society were known by their peculiar dress and appearance; but it is not so now. You cannot be known by your dress. You are like a ship on the sea or privateer sailing under false colours that it may not be known.' 'I feel it best,' adds Shillitoe, 'to give this circumstance a place in these memoirs in hopes it may prove as a watchword to such who may be tempted to gratify their natural inclination, by departing from that simplicity into which the Truth first led its followers' (743. 2. 358).

XIX

Ministers and Ministry

Having sketched the early history of the Hitchin Friends: their sufferings, the formation of their Preparative and Monthly Meetings, and the main branches of their religious testimony, we may now give some brief account of the Ministers by whom the faithfulness of that testimony and the fervour of those Meetings were maintained. It has seemed strange to some detached observers that what looks suspiciously like 'a separate and exclusive ministry' should have grown up in a Society which in its beginning testified so loudly against 'those who exalt the sacerdotal system which silences the voice of the prophets.' Within the Society itself there have been those like William Howitt, 1792–1879, who have looked upon this order of Ministers and Elders with its own Select Meetings and Queries as 'an oligarchy of the most dangerous kind' (853. 774). But there were always safeguards against anything sacerdotal. Not one Minister in a hundred had the learning or the influence, even if he had the will, to lord it over the ordinary members. Most of them conformed to the Scriptural injunction: 'If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all.' Their lowliness of mind has been well emphasized by Robert Barclay. 'God,' he writes in his *Apology*, 'God hath laid aside the wise and learned and the disputers of this world, and hath chosen a few despicable and unlearned instruments to publish his pure and naked truth, and to free it of those mists and fogs wherewith the clergy hath clouded it, that the people might admire

and maintain them' (851. 387). It is just possible that some of the Hitchin Ministers have been 'admired'; but none was ever 'maintained.' The only payment they looked for was 'the penny of peace'—the reward of being able to say with George Fox, 'Wee brought every one to their own teacher' (860. 9). In one solitary instance, in the middle of the last century, a suspicion did arise, but the 'hireling,' so called, without being given the benefit of the doubt, was instantly disowned.

There were various other ways in which Ministers were kept in subjection. The answers given to the Queries were vigilantly scanned by the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders. If Ministers dealt in 'ambiguous expressions,' or were perfunctory and formal, they heard of it anon. Sometimes the Morning Meeting of Ministers in London would take complaints of their conduct or their teaching into review, and descend upon them in a cloud of admonition. Shillitoe, who spoke from painful experience, used to refer to these occasions as 'low, exercising times.' Once, as John Barclay came out of this Meeting after a trying ordeal, Shillitoe took his arm in silent mourning, and after a while broke out with these words: 'John, there is *nothing too bad* for that Morning Meeting.' Certainly their eyes were everywhere. If any made use of 'unbecoming tones, sounds, gestures and affectation, which are not agreeable to Christian gravity'; if any 'travelled without certificates,' or 'failed to labour harmoniously for the advancement of Truth,' or 'judged and contradicted one another in public meeting,' or 'overcharged themselves with business to the hindrance of their service,' or were 'overtaken with a fault,' they could be sure their sins would find them out (703. 89–104, 147, 150). Apart from these inquisitions the best-regulated Minister might suffer the indignity of being 'eldered.' If he spoke not according to the Spirit, or soared up into high notions of his own, the Elders to a certainty would be upon him. There was no getting round that printed Epistle of 1728, which required Ministers 'to keep to the form of sound words or Scripture terms; and that none pretend to be wise above what is there written, and in such pretended wisdom go about to explain the things of God in the words which man's wisdom teaches' (703. 89). And, apart from the Elders, some of the private members took the liberty to chastise the Ministers with the scorpions of their tongues. The story survives in one Hitchin Quaker home of a Minister

being censured in this caustic manner: 'Some think a deal of thee; but to me thy preaching is both dull and tedious.' In the early days, 1737, when Hitchin Friends were sitting with the Friends in Baldock Meeting, Thomas Burr, having impatiently listened for a time to Thomas Coe of Colchester, called upon him to produce his certificate, and, when this was done, Burr took hold of it and tore it to shreds before his face, and then and afterwards treated Coe and those who sent him 'with further contempt and scorn, unbecoming the gravity of Religious men' (656).

'Dry and tedious' a few undoubtedly were. One hears in 1772 of Samuel Spavold, after two hours of prophesying, being

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left to prophesy unto himself, unconscious apparently that all the rest had fled. As some sort of check on him, a conference was held on 'the meaning and scope of the word "prophet" as used in the New Testament.' And one hears of Joseph Allen, who, at a time when the old Meeting House was packed to suffocation for the wedding of Rachel Lucas and Richard Beck in 1822, 'stood nearly an hour in the ministry,' and that, too, after Bevington Gibbins had been 'sweetly engaged at some length in supplication' (809. 139). But of nearly all the Hitchin Ministers it may be said that 'the excellency of their power was of God, who is the Minister of all Ministers'; their sufficiency was of

Him who ' made them able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter that killeth, but of the Spirit that giveth life.' Here we can touch but the hem of their garments as they pass in the pageant of memory; and of one or two of them only.

One thinks first and foremost of William Turner, 1643–1704, the foster-father of Quakerism in Hitchin. He is described in his testimony as a ' hearty lover of the Friends of Truth whom his heart and house were always ready to receive.' It was at his house that the first Meetings were held. It was there that Thomas Story used to stay, and that Thomas Janney died. In 1704 Turner himself travelled on ' to where beyond these voices there is peace.' There is a record of his last moments: ' He charged his children to be none of them that strive to stay at home, but strive who shall go to Meeting.' And he bade them not to mourn for him: ' I find nothing but that it will be well with me to all Eternity ' (762. 1. 281).

XX

Thomas Thompson and Isaac Sharples

Of Thomas Thompson the younger, 1673–1727, it is not easy to speak. He is too tempestuous a man to hold his place in any pageant. And he was one of those who strove never to be at home. Born at Shipsea in Yorkshire of a famous father, he came to Hitchin with ' an ample certificate ' in 1707, and tarried here until the latter end of his life (762. 3. 62–64). But, constantly being taken up by the Spirit, he was driven here, there and everywhere to all places of the earth. In the course of his ' seasonable, serviceable, and comfortable ' ministry of twenty-two years he is said to have travelled 60,000 miles. He cast the bread of life on many waters and his money, too. One hears of his running to the aid of those fellow Ministers who ' have made strait steps to their feet, and whose goings are in the deeps '; in this he followed his father, who in 1675 had furnished George Fox with £5 for his journey to the north. At long intervals, as in 1705 and 1717, he rises, as it were from the dead, in Yearly Meeting, and gives an account of his stewardship in Rhode Island, Long Island, Pennsylvania, Barbados, and other far-off lands. He tells them of ' large and heavenly meetings ' in

Pennsylvania, and of small but no less heavenly Meetings in the Bermudas, where the few Friends that survive 'would be very glad of visitors, and, to speak comparatively, of the crumbs that fall from our table.' And he gives 'all the glory unto the Lord alone, whose delivering, protecting Arm of Power we evidently beheld with us in many Jeopardys and Dangers' (652; 653). As one might easily imagine, the still life of a settled Meeting was never to his liking; and unfortunately he was the last person to dissemble or stifle into silence what he felt. 'The indignation of the Lord,' so he confesses, 'burns in my soul against such as are still in Babylon.' In a series of letters written in 1720 he is said to have made 'divers unjust reflections' upon his brother-in-law, John Fallowfield, and on certain other Ministers of Hertford Monthly Meeting. That was putting it mildly. A perusal of the fourteen heads of the indictment against Thompson shows more precisely the language that he used. Here is a sample: 'a loose pack are ye; deceitful, under-hand workers, taking part with the Dragon warring against the Lamb; ravening wolves; co-workers with the Prince of Darkness and the Bottomless Pitt; Spirits as light as chaff and bitter as wormwood; your Testimony no more than a Blast and Rattle of Wind.'

By these and other worse libels the members there declared themselves to be 'greatly wronged,' and called on Thomas Thompson 'to give such satisfaction as is justly due to a Christian Society.' He flatly refused to do anything of the kind. They visited him and got something less than satisfaction: 'Men,' he said, 'may soon grow florid in discourse and preaching, and yet be in a withering state and condition as to the Ground and Foundation of Truth.' As it was clear 'he could not be prevailed with in a more private Gospel Way,' they then appeared before Hitchin Meeting, but Thompson's own people 'refused to listen or have the letters read.' 'Failing their being in a better disposition,' it was resolved to lay the matter before Quarterly Meeting; but before they could proceed to extremities Thomas Thompson 'is reported to have withdrawn from the Meeting and gone to live within the limits of another Quarterly Meeting.' So he departed out of their midst, but it is evident that his indignation had burned down and that his better self was not at ease: 'he desires all Friends to forgive him and pass it by' (650). Twenty-five years later, worn out with travel and contention, he set out from Saffron Walden on that journey

whence no traveller returns. 'My soul,' he said, 'travels for Zion,' and like Turner he made a glorious end. Whatever else he might be, this Thomas was no doubter. 'To them that may enquire concerning my end,' he exclaimed, 'let them know that I die in the Faith that saves and triumphs over death and hell, finding no cloud in my way, but perfect peace with God, the presence of whose glory is with me.' As the vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem comes to his closing eyes, he breaks out again into ecstasy: 'The sweetness of his love can never be told; the rays of his beauty shine upon me. I am filled with the power of his love. Rejoice with me, rejoice' (653).

Mary Ransom, 1682–1747, of whom it falls next to speak, though a contemporary of Thomas Thompson, was in her nature the very antithesis of him. There was nothing austere or vexatious about her. By one who had suffered from Thomas Thompson's tongue it was remarked that *she* could get on with anyone—'even with a Friend.' 'Possessed,' according to her Testimony, 'of a sprightly genius and strong natural faculties,' she had found it harder than some to deny herself 'those captivating Baits of Youthful Pleasure and Vanity, which had too far betrayed her into a conformity to the vain Customs and Fashions of this evil World.' But the step once taken was never regretted or retraced. There was no compromise, no looking back. Her faith, if one may use the quaint image of her biographer, was 'no fig-leaf covering of a formal Profession.' She knew whom she believed, and she was not ashamed to own her Lord. It was not required of her to travel in his service to the uttermost parts of the earth. She fed his lambs in the green pastures by her home. 'She has often refreshed the Lord's Servants in their Travels,' continues her Testimony, 'being always desirous to entertain strangers and help them.' Blending in perfect womanhood the piety of Mary, the practical wisdom of Martha, and the blessed cheerfulness that was her own, she went on helping others throughout her long ministry of forty years, and then 'quietly departed this life in peace with the Lord and in Unity with his people' (677).

Of Isaac Sharples, 1702–1784, who was born some five years before Thomas Thompson removed to Hitchin, and whose life covered most of the eighteenth century, there is much that could be written, for he printed a 'short narrative' of himself just before he died, and after his death thirty members

signed a Testimony which is by far the longest in the records of the Hitchin Meeting (693). Yet he was a modest, unassuming man: 'I was not found,' he says, 'among the wise and prudent of this world. But the Lord took me from the stones of the street, where in his wisdom and goodness he has often raised up children unto Abraham.' In the Testimony also that same lovable trait is emphasized: 'an innocent cheerfulness, tempered with gravity, adorned his conversation, and his conduct was a pattern of meekness, moderation and love, which gained him general esteem.' There were those in Hitchin Town who loathed the Quakers and who loved to bid against them at the sale of their goods and chattels seized in distraint for tithes. But no one ever dreamed of preventing Sharples from buying back his goods (704). In him they rejoiced to find a Quaker who had no air of general condemnation about him and no exclusiveness. He loved those outside the Society as he loved those within. 'He travelled much in the work of the Ministry,' says the Testimony, 'in this nation, in Scotland and Ireland, also in the Island of Jersey, and was once in Truth's service in Holland; in the exercise of which he was engaged not only amongst those of our religious profession, but frequently amongst others, having many opportunities in public places and barns to unfold the Mysteries of the Kingdom and direct all to the gift of God in themselves. In supplication he was inward and weighty, an awful solemnity covering his spirit, whereby he was frequently favoured with near access to the throne of Grace.' James Jenkins records that he was called 'the lazy preacher,' because 'for a considerable time after standing up his progress was uncommonly slow' (678). But, once started, it was not easy to stop him. At the burial of Edmund Peckover, a noted Minister, he preached for two and a half hours 'with great satisfaction to the meeting.' Samuel Scott, on the other hand, in his *Journal* refers to him as 'a Prince in Israel, not seeking to lord it over God's heritage, but an ensample to the flock; whose ministry was singularly distinguished with brightness, his matter being evangelical and his expressions correct, nervous and animated' (708. 52, 102). There is but one Gospel,' he himself declared, 'however some may have degenerated into Form and called that the Gospel.' And, 'although many of our Society have fallen,' it comforted him to think that 'the Truth is kept to in as much simplicity amongst us as among any people.'

In the service of that truth and simplicity he laboured to the very last. When it was no longer possible to travel in the Ministry it was still possible to write. In many a Quaker home to this day one comes upon letters written with his failing hand, letters of counsel, of rebuke, of admonition, of heavenly comfort. Writing in 1779 to his sister, Ann Young of Bristol (' my sister both in the outward and the inner light '), he laments the ' many grievous, scandalous breaches and revoltings ' that have occurred even in their small Household of Faith, and the defection of those who, ' having loved this present world,' have forsaken the ways of God. ' Many of our youth,' he continues, ' are got into the air and are become enemies to the Cross of Christ, and the Elders are sunk into the Earth, and in too great a degree have lost their savor, so that a dangerous state of lukewarmness now prevails amongst us.' Yet ' there is still a remnant towards whom the visitation of heaven is extended for their help and preservation.' For such as these his heart is exercised, ' that they may be steadfastly abiding in God's holy fear ' (687). Much has been our travail,' he says in a letter to this Quarterly Meeting, written conjointly with Edmund Gurney, Richard Chester, John Kendall and Abraham Gray in 1777, ' much has been our travail on your behalf, that this might be a day of Solemn Alarm to you, to the shaking your minds from the inordinate care and concerns of this life ' (684). One can tell from these letters how this servant of the Most High longed to be engaged in the Ministry again; how he envies such as Joseph Ransom, of whom he notes in 1770, ' he has to our surprise appeared again in the Ministry after lying by for many years.' As for himself, his travelling days were done. Sending a hamper of ' Aples ' to Adey Bellamy in 1780, he speaks, though without complaining, of ' rheumatism in the head; my wife has a severe cod (*sic*), and the grandchildren have the hooping cough ' (690). The writing of the last letters is almost illegible. ' The infirmities of old age increce apace,' he tells his sister, ' I am almost like a ship drawing near to my Eternal Port, but I hope to finish my course in peace ' (687). With him also the end *was* peace. ' It is pleasant,' he said, ' to think that I draw so near to the end of my race and can now set up my Ebenezer and say " hitherto the Lord has been my Shield and exceeding great Reward." ' Then, ' turning himself in his bed, he seemed to fall into a sleep, soon after which he quietly departed without a sigh or groan

on the 18th of the 5th month, 1784, about the 82nd year of his age, a minister about 60 years ' (693).

XXI

Sarah Crawley and Samuel Spavold

Yet another minister who died in her 82nd year and had been a minister ' about 60 years ' was Sarah Crawley, 1717–1799. She was the daughter ' of a fine old woman,' as William Forster describes her on his visit to Hitchin in 1778. ' She is very far in the decline of life, upwards of ninety. I found her reclining on a couch, and appeared in a very languid state, yet upon my asking after some of the ancient Friends she soon revived and told me . . . that William Penn was at her marriage. She also attended the Meeting he held with his family when in the Fleet, said she never saw his equal as a Christian and a Gent: that he appeared of a Rank much superior to other men and much exalted by Affliction. Sam Waldenfield, Thomas Ellwood and all eminent in her time she knew well, and says there were so many in the Ministry in the City that the long gallery in the Gracechurch Meeting would seldom hold them.'

Daughter of this ardent member of the Hitchin Meeting, and granddaughter of John Field, who had compiled the 3rd, 4th and 5th parts of that Quaker Calendar of Saints known as *Piety Promoted*, Sarah was brought up in the Household of Faith and never left it, save to bring other souls inside. For some years she kept a confectioner's shop at Hitchin to support her mother; but when that filial duty was ended she gave herself up to the call of the Ministry. 'She was a Minister, I believe, generally esteemed amongst us,' writes James Jenkins, who knew her well, ' but her manner of delivery was extremely unpleasant. Her voice was harsh and grating, and her cadence the music of dissonance ' (678). Yet none of those to whom she ministered complained. She travelled acceptably and incessantly. It is hard to find a year in which Sarah Crawley does not rise up in Monthly Meeting, ' before the women Friends withdrew,' and make known her concern to visit certain ' families of Friends ' or Meetings in distant parts. In 1745 she returns from Ireland, ' having had a good satisfaction with peace of mind in her journey ' (xxxviii). In 1756 she gives the Meeting an account

xxxviii. Mary Gibson, another Hitchin Minister, returned the same year from the Western parts of the nation, ' with sheaves of peace in her bosom.'

of her labours in Hampshire, Sussex and Kent; 'though she found things low in many places, the Lord by His preserving arm had preserved and helped her to her comfort and satisfaction.' At the age of 78, 'under apprehension of duty,' she cheerfully sets out for Scotland and Wales, and signs the epistles of her Missionary journey, 'your decrepit and affectionate old friend' (679). At the latter end of her long life she found herself powerfully moved to work in the slums of London. 'She died in apartments,' says Jenkins, 'at that despicable part of the Town called Cow Cross, West Smithfield, after living many years in the decent and salubrious town of Hitchin in Hertfordshire. For a migration so unaccountable she pleaded the feelings of duty, and that surely was sufficient reason' (678). Towards the last she writes tender, wistful letters as if from exile to the Friends at home; they are read in Hitchin Meeting, 'much to our satisfaction.' She subscribes herself 'your ancient friend' (691. 74–7). She speaks of passing through the furnace of affliction; yet is undismayed. She can no longer 'crawl to Meeting,' but, as she remarked to those who stood about her bed, 'I have this morning been with the General Assembly and Church of the first born which are written in heaven.' Her body was laid to earth, not in the burial-ground at Hitchin amongst her own people but in Bunhill Fields. Her soul travels on (762. 3. 288–290).

We must pass over the testimony of Rudd Wheeler, 1728–1807, who was always lamenting 'our want of that zeal and Loveliness of Spirit which so eminently characterized our early Friends'; and that of Fidelity Wheeler, his wife, 1728–1767, who, 'having whilst young indulged her natural inclination in Gaiety of Dress, was graciously visited with close and clear conviction, and was made willing to enter into covenant with the Bridegroom of her Soul'; and that of Joshua Wheeler, their son, 1755–1803, a Minister 'so cautious not to move without the unity of his brethren, that he would stand open to the feelings of the least babe who was alive in the Truth' (696; 697; 755; 762).

A very different sort of man was Samuel Spavold, 1708–1795. To him the word 'caution' was unknown. Certainly he knew it not in his 'flaming and canicular days.' His Testimony admits that 'he committed most of the follies incident to youth' (762. 3. 194–6). But 'through the merciful visitation of divine Grace he became so effectually reached as to be stopped in his

career of vanity about the age of nineteen, and a short time after received a gift in the Ministry.' Forty years he travelled as Ship's Carpenter and Joiner and itinerant Minister in the wildernesses of Bawtry and Deptford and Chatham, and then at last in 1750 he entered into the promised land of Hitchin. Here he came to settle, doing a delicate piece of carpentry and cabinet-work now and again for Friends (xxxix), but for the most part

SAMUEL SPAVOLD

engaged in the work of the Ministry. In this also he displayed a lack of caution. At times he was 'baptized into close and deep exercises which much excited the sympathy of the Friends, to whom he approved himself an exemplary pattern of condescen-

xxxix. In the lovely home of the late LawsonThompson of Elmside, Hitchin, there is a bookcase made by Spavold, an excellent specimen of his craftsmanship. For fifteen years and more I have been privileged to open its perfectly fitting

sion; and once on a particular occasion signified that he had rather lay down his natural life than lose the Unity of his Brethren ' (678). But, however good his intentions might be, he was constantly distressing the Brethren by breaking out into Visions and Prophecies and Signs (670). He could not help it. The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and besides he was obedient to the apostolical direction: ' If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ' (1 *Peter* 4. 11). In manner of speech, however, he was far from oracular. There was no thunder or lightning, no voice as from Sinai. The inspiration would trickle on for hours. On the 3rd of the tenth month, 1749, at Salterforth, ' after he had preached what may be called doctrine for the space of three hours and one half,' he began to prophesy and, from the notes that were taken down in writing, it seems as if the prophecy also must have lasted three hours and one half (667). In 1751 he had a concern for Ireland, but ' the Friends of the Morning Meeting in London,' who had the conduct of Ministers under their care, having heard things about Spavold, ' thought it prudent for him to wait longer '; the certificate which the Hitchin Meeting had already granted was therefore cancelled (xl) (679). The next year, however, he obtained liberty to go, and there ' expressed himself in a prophetic manner, observing how the Lord had shaken the Rod several times in this and other nations, and yet it seemed to have but little effect.' He feared nothing but heavy judgments would do. ' But a stripping day was at hand and that was the generation which should see it.' On his fourth visit to Ireland he was accompanied by James Jenkins, whom we have already quoted (688). ' Spavold has great sweetness of disposition,' allows Jenkins, ' but his judgment was often superseded by the power of his imaginations ' (xli) (678).

doors and take out one by one the precious volumes within. ' A disjointed medley,' as Dryden would say, ' of ill-assorting things,' wherein what remains of the great collection of *Quakeriana* made by John Thompson stands cheek by jowl with such vanities as Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, *The Diversions of a Malt-worm*, and *The Life of Turner*. But what a paradise for an unconverted reader!

xl. Here you have an excellent illustration of the sagacity of the Morning Meeting operating as a check upon the impulsiveness of Particular Meetings, who, if one may dare to say so, were too much inclined to give certificates for service elsewhere to those who were not liked at home.

xli. Writing of him again upon his death forty years later, Jenkins uses almost the same words: ' He was a Friend whom I long knew and loved with a species of filial affection, although an unbeliever in his prophetical denunciations ' (678. 362).

In 1749, when the murrain was raging amongst the horned cattle, Spavold would have it that they were afflicted for the sins of the nation. 'Lo! how they look upon their masters, while the tears come trickling from their eyes. As they are afflicted, so shall the inhabitants of poor England be. A great and terrible day coming over England, [greater] than any you have seen, is nigh at hand. I believe I myself shall see it' (678. 101). In that the prophet was mistaken, though he did live to see the Revolution in France. It was another prophecy of his that he should lay down his bones in Ireland (678. 102). Yet his grave is in Hitchin soil. Some other predictions there are which he put into writing against that day when as a prophet he should have honour in his own country. For a time they were circulated 'all over our Society in England, Ireland and Wales.' Now they circulate no more. Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, they lie buried in the Friends House library, waiting for their glorious resurrection. If he chooses, a student may get leave to disinter them as the present writer did, but let him rather ask the sexton-librarian to descend into the vaults for a letter which Spavold wrote to Samuel Day on the 29th of the first month, 1764. It is a letter professedly from one horse-dealer to another, for Day had a mare which Spavold wanted for his ministerial journeys. Incidentally it shows one Friend trading with another as they were enjoined to do; and each so careful to study the other's advantage that no bargain could be struck: 'The next thing is the worth of her. Thou says 7 guineas, but I may have her for 5. It is very cind of thee, but I think it would be very rong of me if I should entertain such a thought as to desire her for less than her Reall vally. . . . Also, my cind friend, as she is a favourite of thine, I would advise thee to keep her, and not part with her neither to me nor to any body els. . . . I understand by thy letter that thou hath pade a visit to Kezia Lawrence. I hope the good hand is in it, and you have my sincere Desires for your prevention (xlii). Whilst I am a scribbling, I was a thinking, if thee should have Kezia, maybe thou may liek to keep a chase, and then thy mare may be of good servis to thee' (680).

The time came when neither on foot nor on horse could this

xlii. Dr. Norman Penney would have me read 'preservation,' but that seems rather unkind to poor Kezia. 'Prevention' is here used, I think, in its scriptural sense.

Minister go upon his travels. 'On truth's account,' he had journeyed once to America, 1757, where he met John Woolman, who refers to him as 'my beloved friend,' once to Scotland and four times to Ireland and Wales. 'Tall in person, of a thin habit, and latterly of a genteel appearance,' the figure of this fine, prophetic soul was familiar in Meetings far and wide. And then he came no more. 'I am ready,' he said, 'to go and preach to them on my crutches.' But that could not be, nor could he endure to travel in state. Though he was married four times, he had never been able 'to keep a chase' for his wives' sake or his own (xliii). So he abode perforce at Hitchin and prophesied to his fourth wife. Sometimes he struggled to Meeting and stood in the Ministry. But 'in these later years,' says Jenkins, 'he was much troubled with cough and asthma that caused great expectoration, interrupted utterance, and rendered frequent pauses needful. His tuneful cadence, when used amidst these hindrances, sometimes excited levity among the younger part of the audience' (678). At last he could not even travel to Meeting. But occasionally some Minister would travel to see him. 'On the 1st of the sixth month, 1790,' says Samuel Smith in his *Journal*, 'I went to Hitchin, where I had the company of that worthy servant of the Most High, Samuel Spavold, who was very affectionate and kind as well as fatherly to me. The good old man, now in the 82nd year of his age, appeared lively and green, and full of good fruits.' Five years later a larger company of Hitchin Friends stood around the old man's bed. 'The Truth,' he assured them, as he looked back over his Ministry of sixty-five years, 'the Truth is a precious thing: it is worth seeking for.' And then, taking each of them by the hand in turn, he said, 'Farewell, I love you, I love you all' (762. 3. 196).

XXII

Mercy Ransom

To the strict behaviour and plain apparel of Mercy Ransom, 1728–1811, some reference has been made, but not to her Ministry. From her youth up Mercy Bell, as she was then,

xliii. According to Jenkins it was his fourth wife who 'made a gentleman of him,' but not then, and certainly not before, was there any 'dignified reserve, not one single inch of Church-Buckram' (678).

MERCY RANSOM

had been carefully prepared in the way of the Lord. Her commonplace books and diaries (842. 10–16) are full of her spiritual experiences, Scripture texts and the religious outpourings of Ministering Friends (xliv). She notes down for her remembrance what Mary Peisley said at Meeting in 1749: 'Bad books are as effectual poison to the mind as arsenick to the Body.' She takes to herself the advice that Susanna Morris gave to her brothers in 1753, 'to take heed and beware of Deism.' She is diligent in recording the sayings of Penn and Naylor and Story. She goes to Joseph Besse's burial and 'to my Satisfaction, Edification and Comfort' hears Samuel Fothergill preach, 'not from a Scripture text yet from an undoubted Truth': 'It is a solemn thing to live and an awful thing to die.' In the earthquake of the 8th of the twelfth month, 1749–50, she hears 'the warning that infinite Wisdom has seen meet to send us,' and thinks it should 'convince every mortal, not only that there is an Almighty Being but that he can shake us poor worms into Atoms in a moment' (842. 10–16).

Yet this poor worm was not easily shaken. She was a woman without fear. There was one member of Hitchin Meeting who 'was grown to such a pitch of wickedness' that the two Elders appointed to speak to him 'concerning his ungodly practices' did not 'think it proper.' In plain words they feared the consequences. When this came to the knowledge of Mercy Ransom she rushed in where Elders feared to tread; and not only spoke to the reprobate, but brought him back, the veriest lamb, into the fold. From her youth up she had possessed the remarkable power of casting out the evil spirits in men. In 1753, thirty years before she was recorded a Minister, she was compelled by her conscience to go and preach to 'an abundance of loitering people' in Rosemary Lane and Red Lion Street, London; for her heart, as she expressed it, 'was in pain on account of the enormous flood of impiety and immorality wherewith the nation was apparently overrun.' Before a crowd of curious, scoffing people this unmarried girl of twenty-five 'stood up in great weakness. But the power of an endless life gradually rose and made her instrumental to shower down the refreshing rain of the

xliv. The names of more than forty Ministers are to be found, including that of Joseph Rule, the Quaker in White, *c.* 1690–1770, over whose open grave Isaac Sharples of Hitchin pronounced these fitting words, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.'

Gospel in a plentiful manner, so that many hearts were pierced.' ' Some of them smote their breasts and cried out, " we have never had such a visit as this. This is not such preaching as theirs that came with Hell and damnation in their mouths. She comes from God to offer his grace and mercy to us." ' Another day, when she was exhorting the people in the Park, ' the soldiers desired her to walk on. One of the people of a genteel sort said to the soldiers, " Your orders will extend to hinder this gentlewoman from preaching what is good in the Park, but not to take notice of many wicked things that are done there." Another said to Mercy, " If you do go on, they can't hurt you. God Almighty will protect you in this good work." ' On yet another occasion ' a person in liquor endeavoured to interrupt her by firing a gun close by, which startled and disturbed many. She stood in silence for a time amongst the drunken, dissolute company, many of whom bore the marks of prostitution and infamy, till the Spirit of Truth arose over them, and then, stepping upon a bench, she declared the great day of the Lord to them with uncommon fervency and awfulness ' (671).

In 1765 she was married to Joseph Ransom of this parish, and from that time forward made her home in Hitchin. But her diaries show her to have travelled extensively in the Ministry throughout Great Britain and Ireland. With her ' ancient friend Sarah Crawley,' with Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young, with Job Scott, with Ann Christy and with Phoebe Lucas, she goes like a ministering angel from place to place, from house to house, bringing always more light, more truth, more love. Her energy is amazing. During the five weeks she laboured at Bristol in 1792 she held no fewer than 190 sittings and visited 691 persons. In 1795, when she was visiting the Quarterly Meeting of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, she rode some 783 miles (842. 14). She will hear of some moribund Meeting, or some poor soul in distress, in a remote corner of Scotland or Wales, and she will be gone the moment her certificate is signed. Months will pass and nothing will be known. Her husband will be in constant anxiety. And then one day she will appear, fresh and radiant as ever, as when she returned from Ratcliff Monthly Meeting in 1799, saying, ' I have been favoured with divine help to support me in this concern even to my humbling admiration, and have returned with the reward of Peace ' (679).

NOS. 86–90 BANCROFT

Mercy Ransom's room is below the third gable from the right

Her active Ministry was brought to an end in 1802 by a fall, from which she never recovered. The last nine years were passed in acute suffering and seclusion. 'Nothing will do but patience,' she declared, and with the same courage that she had always shown she began to order her life afresh. One can watch her as she sits, 'sweetly musing in my chamber' (xlv), for she kept a diary which was published after her death, and which has ministered no little consolation to other Suffering Souls (714). After the storm and stress of so many years of travel it is good to see the heavenly calm that settled upon her in this harbourage of Hitchin. It is as though she had been always a Quietist at heart. And now that 'deep, inward stillness,' so long desired, was to be undisturbed. Now could she prove that hard saying ascribed to John Swinton, which she had pondered over and put into her commonplace book as a girl: 'In stillness there is fullness; in fullness there is nothingness; in nothingness there are all things' (851. 336). To her 'the solemn silence is always exceedingly precious, superior to hearing or speaking the most exalted words' (714. 5). One must take care to protect it from 'the malady of thought,' the mere cleverness of man. 'There is too much reason to apprehend that our Society members do not see all Satan's stratagems, one of which I believe is drawing them to read and perhaps converse on philosophical subjects, aiming to know more than the human understanding can reach.' 'Oh! the loss many of us sustain,' she continues, 'for want of more inward abstraction: not only from improper desires but *even a silence from all thoughts*. This blessed silence, not even the enemy of our soul's peace can enter' (714. 81).

Truly she had the Quietist's reward. She speaks again and again of 'the inshinings of divine light,' which come like a benediction into her darkened room (714. 13). At times the glory of it transfigures her whole being, and the pain and isolation are forgotten; '1806. 12th of 6th month. Yesterday ill all day—poor night—this morning low, under conflict of body and mind, when suddenly, ere I was aware, my soul made me as the chariots of Aminadib, being favoured with the fresh income of divine love and life; which, if not at times vouchsafed, I think I should lose all hope of ever seeing the beauty of the Lord again in the

xlv. The present writer can do this more easily than some, for he passed three years in the same chamber (an upstairs room in No. 90, Bancroft), musing not quite so sweetly over the mysteries of the law.

land of the living.' Alas! the vision fails. The mists of the world's illusions obscure the beauty of the Lord. 'Open the gates,' she beseeches, 'that the righteous nation may enter in. Oh! joyful to be admitted!' (714. 17). But no, nothing but patience would do. It was to be five years more before her light affliction worked for her a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Then it was, on the 25th of 5th month, 1811, that she awoke to a new world and was satisfied with the likeness of her Lord. The vision was true. The dream so often dreamed had come to pass; 'My spiritual eye opened to see the beautiful state of the true Jerusalem, the city of the Saints' solemnity' (762. 4. 29).

XXIII

Women's Meetings

It will be convenient to give a brief account here of the Women's Meeting, which Mercy Ransom in her lifetime had done so much to uphold. Over the setting up of this there had been much contention. Both at Hitchin and Hertford the members had inclined to the Wilkinson and Story view. They said that women ought not to go gadding about the country neglecting their household duties. Rather they should 'stay by their firesides and wash their dishes.' Already they possessed more power than ability to make use of it; and George Fox, in urging these 'faithfull women's meetings,' was merely turning their heads. In time the controversy developed into actual schism; and many outrageous things were spurted out in the heat of it against Fox himself. From a paper in Friends House Library, dated 1678 and endorsed: 'George Fox's answers to the Durty Spirits at Hertford' (646), it seems that certain members, jealous of his personal ascendency in the Society, conspired to blacken his character and bring him down to the dust. 'A lying, durty paper,' as Fox termed it, 'was spreade up and downe' the country, containing the signed allegations of the local Friends. According to Henry Sweeting and his wife, 'George Fox did say of the Separate Meeting of John Story that "only whores and rogues, drunkards and swearers"' resorted there; and they accused him further of mocking at a marriage performed by John Story as a mere orgy of eating, drinking and making merry. 'These words,' adds Sweeting, 'were spoken at my house in

Hertford, and if George Fox will come to tryall I shall prove the substance of what is written.' Mary Beal and Thomas Moss of the Baldock and Hitchin Meeting in their Testimony went further still. According to them, George Fox declared in their hearing one day at Baldock 'that John Story's men and women "went together like whores and rogues."' 'These,' retorts Fox, 'are lies and perversions of my words.' Another 'wilful and high spirit,' Edward Perken, sheltered himself behind a general statement: 'George Fox did speak a rabble of lies of people behind their backs, and be it upon his own head.' Upon him also Fox turns as a 'bearer of false witness—Blessed be the Lord who will avenge himself of such and clear the innocent.' No sooner was Perken silenced than another uprose, testifying that George Fox had said, 'I set up these Women's Meetings, and if I should throw them down again they would call me a folle and an asse.' 'Denied,' thunders out Fox in his reply; 'I said they were set up by the power of God.' Now and again, in the pauses of this storm of words, one catches the still, small voice of Isaac Penington, the peace-maker, lamenting, expostulating, entreating: 'Oh! the sorrow and deep travail of this day because of the rents which the subtile enemy hath made. Was there ever such an occasion of blaspheming? Was there ever such stumbling-blocks laid before the weak and before the tender-hearted? At whose door will the Lord lay it?' Fox could have told him that. Behind and beneath all, directing everything, himself discreetly hidden, hovered the implacable spirit of John Story. 'The Lord deliver this people,' breaks out Fox at last, 'from this devouring and destroying spirit.' Continuing his letters of mediation, Penington exhorts the Hertford and Hitchin Friends 'to be guided and enabled by him [i.e. G. Fox] either in an holy severity or tender-meekness as the Lord shall go before and go along with you' (646). But not for twenty years were these schismatics inclined to sue for peace, not till Penington's 'guide and enabler' lay silent and unable in the grave. From a report to Yearly Meeting in 1684 it is clear that at that date only 'a remnant of the members was preserved.' But wiser counsels prevailed, and by 1700 Friends could say that 'the separation at Hertford, Ware and Hitchin was much laid aside' (851. 474).

It seems as though peace was brought about only by the abandonment of the proposal; for not until 1738 does the Men's Meeting 'agree that our Women Friends may have the privilege

of meeting by themselves as is the usual custom among the Churches of Christ' (679). Nevertheless, there are sufficient records surviving to illustrate the unassuming work they sought and were allowed to do. This consisted for the most part 'in relieving the necessities of such as are sick or weak or in want,' as Fox had first ordained. One observes them—more clearly perhaps in the later periods—going about Hitchin distributing coals and blankets and other comforts; combating disease and teaching the rudiments to orphan children. In Meeting and out of Meeting one sees them busily engaged finding good places for the girls and boys. 'Do Friends want servants or servants want places?' runs one of the Queries (No. 9) they set themselves to answer. And they not only find the places, but watch over those in service and offer to compose the differences between mistresses and maids. There are tracts, of course, for every occasion. Each of the maids is given a copy of *Instruction and Advice to Girls intended to assist them in the performance of their several duties as Servants*. The boys are given Anthony Purver's *Counsel to Friends' Children*, or one of Mary Sewell's popular effusions, such as *Mother's Last Words; a Ballad for Boys*, which ran to twenty-four editions. The grown-ups receive *The Swearer alone with God*, or *To Men in the Intervals from Work*; or, as on one occasion in 1845, that odd pamphlet entitled *Newspapers, Mountebanks, Bells, Clocks or Watches, rejected by the Grace of God, and disowned by the Faith of Jesus*. In the good work of book-distribution they had been much inspired by a Yearly Meeting advice of 1764, which, though rather deprecated in the Men's Meeting, approved itself to the women and was recorded in full on their minutes: 'This Meeting, being sorrowfully affected under a consideration of the hurtful Tendancy of Reading Plays, Romances, Novels, and other pernicious books, do earnestly recommend to every member of the Society to discourage and suppress the same, and particularly to acquaint all booksellers under our name with the painful anxiety occasioned by the reports of some instances of selling or lending such books. And we further request that Friends everywhere be very careful of all books in which their children read, seeing there are many under the specious titles of Religion and Morality containing sentiments repugnant to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus' (703. 11).

In addition to this good work they sifted the clearness of those

of their own sex who were 'toward marriage,' paid domiciliary visits to such as had given 'occasions of dissatisfaction,' and sent their own 'grave and solid' Ministers to comfort the people in the neighbouring Preparative Meetings. They in their own turn were comforted by Ministers from near and far (692). In 1773 'our worthy friends Sarah and Deborah Morris from Pennsylvania favoured us with their company' (854. 562). In 1789 came Catherine Phillips, whom Jenkins describes as 'the great Autocratix' (853. 197). In 1802 came Charity Cook of South Carolina and Mary Swett of New Jersey; practical women both, who in the intervals of their ministry would teach these English housewives 'how to make yeast as they do in America' (xlvi) (816. 4. 30). The year following they had 'the acceptable company of Tabitha Middleton of Wellingboro,' one aforetime beguiled by 'the lust of the eye and the pride of life,' but now of a 'humble and circumspect deportment' (762. 3. 442). In 1806 that of Mary Naftel of Guernsey: 'Sweet is the fellowship of congenial spirits even here,' she is reported to have said, 'but what must it be with Saints and angels where there is no alloy' (762. 4. 164). Following her in 1809 came Sarah Lamley of Tredington, who in a ministry of sixty years visited nearly every one of the Quarterly Meetings of England and Wales (738). She was accompanied by Elizabeth Townsend, a sensitive, suffering woman upon whom 'the enemy was often permitted to come down like a flood.' Yet she steeled herself to this service and, 'after becoming more resigned to the Lord's requiring, the language of her heart was, "if I perish, let it be at thy footstool"' (725). In 1810 there came Rebecca Byrd, 'whose concern was not only to gather the people to Christ that he might be their saviour from sin, but that, taught of him, they might be brought to a clear understanding of the spirituality and peaceableness of his kingdom' (735). In 1833 came Luke Howard, the pioneer in meteorology and correspondent of Goethe (853. 310).

It was not by these visitations only that the Women's Meeting at Hitchin was saved from its domesticity and given a larger view. For years many of its members had attended the Annual Assembly of Women Friends in London; and it was due not a little to Mercy Ransom and Esther Tuke that the scruples of the men

xlvi. They also taught them how to smoke. Edward Pease speaks of seeing them 'strolling down Melksham street with their pipes in their mouths' (824).

were overcome at last and the Assembly endowed with full powers as ' The Yearly Meeting of Women Friends held in London ' (xlvii). It is remarkable to see how many Hitchin women served this newly constituted Yearly Meeting in the arduous office of Clerk: Phoebe Lucas, afterwards Phoebe Allen, 1801–5, 1807, 1809: Ann Lucas 1811–12, 1814–15, 1818, 1820, 1824: Esther Seebohm 1846, 1855–6. It was by the care and oversight of these clerks, ' the power of Christ being the authority of them,' that the purpose of their founder was fulfilled, ' that they might

ANN LUCAS

all labour in His power, and in His grace, and in His spirit, and in His light, to do His service and His business in Truth and Righteousness ' (853. 113–18).

It would have been fitting to close this long line of Hitchin

xlvii. There is a tradition that when Joseph Gurney Bevan saw the delegation of women advancing towards the table with Esther Tuke, whom Rebecca Jones calls ' a sort of princess ' at its head, he audibly said in the words of King Ahasuerus, ' What is thy petition, Queen Esther, and it shall be granted thee? What is thy request, and it shall be performed ' (853. 116).

Ministers with Thomas Shillitoe, 1754–1836, who came to Hitchin in the seventh year after Mercy Ransom died. But there has been more than a little reference to him already in this chapter; and it is proposed to give a full account of him in the companion volume of *Hitchin Worthies*. Those who are impatient to know more should consult the bibliography, section 'The Quakers,' at the conclusion of this book.

XXIV

Stagnation and Decline

We can now pass on to study the later periods of Hitchin Quakerism—an era marked in the main by stagnation and decline, but lit up with many a gleam of evangelical fervour and missionary zeal. 'The times are poor, and a famine seems to threaten in the land,' said Phoebe Allen, a Hitchin minister, shortly before she died, 1857 (712. 45. 5). But even in these lean years there were always 'morsels of heavenly comfort,' as Shillitoe was wont to call them. However darkened the outlook, the Inner Light was never extinguished; it flickered but did not fail. Those who are curious to examine the decline of Quakerism will find traces of it very early, almost with the passing of 'the First Publishers of Truth.' Casting his eyes over the Society as a whole in 1680, Steven Crisp notes with pain how 'some are holding up the truth in a bare formality, sitting down at ease in it, and unconcerned whether the whole plant grow, either in themselves or others' (851. 327). But it is not till the middle of the next century that Hitchin Meeting was seriously affected. Visiting here in 1749, Samuel Bownas complains that he 'had but a low time' (672. 196). This may have been due to his own preaching, which has been described as 'slow in the up-take'; once, indeed, when a Woman Friend interrupted him in his sermon, he remarked to her: 'Have patience, 'twill be better by and by' (851. 550). But there is reason to know that lowness was already latent in the Meeting. As a boy, Bownas had been wont to spend the greater part of Meeting in sleep. But that was long ago. Now with his 'great voice' he was breaking in upon the slumbers of those engaged in a sounder sleep: 'I found,' he says, 'a brave, zealous and loving people in the root of true religion and discipline . . . but there were also some who seemed

very perfect in the form . . . but, for all that, the inside was not right, so that I found very close exercise amongst them in warning them against the leaven of the Pharisees, which was equally if not more hurtful to religion than that of the publicans . . . setting forth that a form without life would not avail' (851. 521).

In the year of Bownas's visitation, the Hitchin Meeting, replying to a Query, confesses its own sins: 'As to a growth in the Truth, we may say with grief little visibly appears, for, as iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. No convincement since last year that we know of.' In 1755 they 'cannot but see with sorrow a state of indifference and negligence thro' indulgence of ease to the flesh.' Once again, in 1767, 'divers amongst us are preserved alive in the Mistical Body and know a growth in the Truth, but with concern we have to observe much lukewarmness and indifference appears' (658). There was always more ardour in the Women's Meeting; but by 1754 they, too, are 'sorrowfully affected under the consideration of a lukewarm state that is gotten in amongst us.' It might have been thought that the visit of John Woolman in the sixth month of 1772 would have stirred them into animation, but they do not even record his name upon their minutes (xlviii). 'Very perfect in the form,' they punctually observe their Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, but more and more often those sadly significant words 'Mett as Useall' are all that their Clerk can record. 'Are not Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings going on from quarter to quarter and from year to year,' asked Thomas Shillitoe, 'satisfying themselves with telling the same dismal tale: "We hope some amongst us witness a growth in the Truth"? Now if the ground of this hope were called for, I fear it would not be found in the general to be that well-grounded hope which gives victory over the world. . . . So little is there of the arising of that Divine Life which is the crown of all our assemblings together' (743. 1. 208).

xlviii. Here, as elsewhere, the first impression was unfavourable. His undyed homespun clothes, his grey-white beaver hat, his generally dishevelled appearance, created such misgivings that it was thought best to leave his visit unrecorded. It was only after his death, four months later, they found they had entertained an angel unawares. There was an almost indecent haste to exalt the memory of this Minister whom, whilst living, they had hardly deigned to notice. As quickly as possible Hitchin Meeting procured copies of his *Tracts Concerning the Ministry* to distribute amongst its members.

Writing his manuscript *History of Hitchin* in 1815, Dunnage remarks, 'The Friends in this town are numerous and respectable' (28. 181). There in that word 'respectable' you have one cause of the decline. Too soon cured of what Shaftesbury had called 'the distemper of enthusiasm,' they had fallen away from the daring vision of their early days into the besetting sin of orthodoxy. It was not by might of worldly influence, nor by power of worldly riches, but by the Spirit that their fathers had chained down the red dragon of Persecution in those early days. Their task—less dangerous but no less difficult—it was to slay that other dragon of Tradition with the light of a thousand years glittering upon its scales. Many of them, alas! were confronting it not with the sword of the spirit but with the placid pens of persuasion and the stiff shirts of respectability. They were setting up a Tradition of their own, no less demoralizing than that which they sought to destroy. They were becoming as ritualistic in the utter absence of form as others were in their excess of form. They whose fathers had overcome the world were now by that same world being overcome. Much has been written of the love of riches that was at this time creeping into the fold; and at Yearly Meeting in 1794 an Irishman appears to have blurted out the truth: 'The people are much after the world, and afraid to let slip any opportunity of making money.' But there were other temptations at work, no less deceitful than riches. For one thing, whereas they had been compelled to stand aloof from all political activities by their refusal to take an oath, now one by one, as Friends grew more 'respectable,' the civil disabilities were being removed. In this sense also they were going into the world. By the urge of conscience, or the persuasion of their fellow men, one Quaker after another was beginning to wear the 'Livery of the Publick'; in spite of all the past, some thought it no betrayal of their First Principles to become even Justices of the Peace, so called. To others it seemed a declension, an occasion for misgiving and shaking of the head. As for Thomas Shillitoe, he was 'much exercised by the temptations and snares that may be laid for us.' He thought that 'the world thus taking us by the hand was no sign of our advancement in the Truth.' Ann Lucas, 1769–1853, a Minister for more than fifty years, added the weight of her testimony to his. 'We should do more wisely,' she declared one day at Meeting, 'to cherish the last words bequeathed to us by our faithful servant

and establisher George Fox: " My desires are that you may be kept out of all the beggarly elements of the world, which is below the Spiritual region, to Christ the Head and hold him " ' (647. 6).

XXV

The Evangelical Controversy

But there, again, was another occasion for stumbling. How were they to lay hold upon Christ? Was each one to follow after him according to the light within—a light varying so strangely in intensity with each separate soul of man—or were they as a body to dwell together in unity like his first disciples, and order their lives according to the infallible authority of Holy Writ? That was the problem which in that testing time, 1820–1840, was rending their beloved Society asunder. In America it had already led to a most disastrous schism. Shillitoe, who was there in the midst of it, 1826–1829, had told them of the appalling scenes he had witnessed in New York Yearly Meeting of 1828, when the Hicksite party, being baffled in their attempt to wrest the minute out of the hands of the Clerk, endeavoured to prevent his reading of it by striking their sticks against the wall of the meeting-house and stamping on the floor with their feet and umbrellas. ' They hooted and hissed and some were heard to swear: the windows being down, the tumult was so great, people outside the house compared it to thunder at a distance ' (743. 2. 311–13). In the Beaconite Controversy of 1835–6 they in England likewise were to pass through the refiner's fire, and many of their members were purged away. ' This year,' writes William Lucas of Hitchin in 1836, ' is remarkable for a great secession of members from our Society owing to a considerable difference in religious views from those which had always been deemed our peculiar principles ' (24). He was of the older school which remained. Those of the younger, evangelical school, who felt that Quakerism had lost its driving force and was dwindling into a mere code of morals, were constrained to go out into the wilderness and seek a more ' spiritual region ' there. It was a sorrowful time; and yet, as one looks back upon it, one sees the blessings that it brought. The gold that came out of that refiner's fire had a purity and a currency not found before.

It is from this period undoubtedly one dates that blending of

WILLIAM LUCAS, 1786–1846

From a painting by Samuel Lucas

mysticism and evangelical fervour which is the hall-mark of the modern Quaker. In Hitchin Meeting from 1820 onwards it is surprising to see how much leaven of Gospel teaching was at work. Clearly those who stayed in the Society had learned something from those who left. There is less and less insistence on the inner light in every solitary man; more looking up to Christ as the Light of the world. Shillitoe himself is an interesting example of this transition period. Here was a typical, traditional member of the Society of Friends—one who held that not in any pomp of ritual, or sacramental rite, or page of sacred book, but in the very heart of humanity, was the true God to be found. To him as to John Chrysostom 'the real Shekinah is Man.' To one so persuaded it was not likely that the new teaching would appeal. After listening impatiently to one evangelical discourse, he is reported to have said: 'Why, John Wilkinson, thou wouldst make us mere Bible Christians.' Yet at times he seemed on the verge of being one himself. 'He has rather a singular concern on hand now,' writes John Thompson of Hitchin to his brother Edward in 1823, 'that of reading the Scriptures to some very depraved and profligate inhabitants of a certain part of the town [Hollow Lane and Dead Street], which has from generation to generation been noted for the filth and depravity of its inhabitants. Thomas thinks he feels it a duty to go and invite them to hear the Scriptures read, and accordingly a room in the centre of the lane has been procured (xlix). A committee of Friends of whom I am one have consented to assist Thomas' (they were, in fact, appointed more as bodyguard than Bible Students), 'and we have arranged for twelve of us to take it alternately, three at a time. I hope it will be of service, but I shall be glad when the first time is over, as it is uncertain how we may be received by them. I don't know any town or street, either at Yeovil or Sherborne, that can be compared with this vile place, so that there is some room for amendment amongst them' (721). There, surely, you have the outward and visible signs of a Bible Christian. And for the inward you have his own dying words in 1836: 'I feel I have nothing to depend upon but the mercies of God in Christ Jesus. I do not rely for salvation

xlix. W. J. Fitch, head master of the British School, used to speak to his boys about these first readings of the Bible in that quarter of the town. There are many who remember the impressive way in which Fitch himself read the Scripture. Although he always wore his tall white hat in school he would reverently remove it before opening the Bible.

upon any merits of my own; all my own works are as filthy rags; my faith is in the merits of Christ Jesus and in the offering he made for us' (743. 2. 424). Could even a Methodist say more?

Right through the forties, fifties and sixties of the last century this evangelical fervour was encouraged, but none of those who had been cast out in the thirties for holding the same views were received into membership again. 'John Pease was at Meeting,' records a Hitchin Elder in 1851, 'impressively engaged on the importance of looking unto Christ, and enlarged on the infinite love and compassion of the Lamb. If we had more such men among us how different would our Society be.' In 1867 the Bible itself was read for the first time in open Meeting (853. 885). It is not until late in the sixties that one observes the doubt creeping in whether they were not departing from their first principles and in danger of losing their identity amongst the other dissenting bodies. In 1868, when Frederick Marsh went so far as to tell Hitchin Monthly Meeting, 'I own the Bible and the Bible only as the Christian's guide, and by its teachings I stand or fall,' they were relieved to discover another reason why he should be deprived of his membership (679).

XXVI

Revival of Persecution

This evangelical awakening would appear to have come too late and lasted too short a time to check the decline that had previously set in. One by one, by death, by marriage, by disownment, by resignation, 'having found themselves more edified by attending the worship of the Establishment,' the members melted away. Their number falls from 200 in 1750 to 100 in 1850; and from that again to 50 in 1929. The neighbouring Meetings were in a still more grievous plight. They not only declined but disappeared. In 1778 Stotfold was discontinued and the Meeting-house was sold. In 1845 Ashwell was converted into a British School. Royston ceased to meet in 1848. Cranfield was closed in 1849 (679). At Baldock, the original home of Quakerism in these parts, it has to be reported that 'the Meeting is held irregularly as there is only one resident Friend.' He sends piteous appeals to Hitchin Friends begging them to come

and sit with him. 'The Meeting Houses closed within the present century,' observes William Ransom in 1882, 'has claimed our serious consideration.' Now and again, as at Hitchin in 1825, the members are able to rejoice over one new Friend received by 'convincement': 'I have for some time,' writes Mary Ann Fryer in her application, 'been convinced of the insufficiency of self-activity with respect to worship, and drawn into a state of quiet waiting, and am thereby united to Friends in the different branches of their religious testimonies' (658). But for the most part the Meeting was reduced to living on its birthright members. And many of these were disposed to forgo that birthright for something that only another religious Society could give—to wit, the outward sacraments. One by one the old familiar faces disappeared, and desire for sacraments was the reason most frequently alleged. The orthodox Quaker view may be expressed in the words of James Hack Tuke, a leading member of the Hitchin Meeting through the last half of the nineteenth century: 'I in my heretical way,' he said in writing to one of his Anglican friends, 'feel that your Symbols have taken the place of the Life, and the mere fact of participating in the outward bread and wine is almost substituted for the inward and spiritual eating and drinking of his flesh and his blood' (810). Yet there were many who found these outward symbols, so called, more sufficing, and indeed more inward than the inward light. The minute-books record the resignations of Francis Lucas in 1869, Edward and Mary Manser and Ann and Matilda Lucas in 1871, Alice Mary and Marianna Lucas in 1874, Mary Thompson in 1876 and Catherine Thompson in 1877. 'I leave the Society,' writes the last named, 'with best wishes for its welfare and earnestly desire to give up none of that simplicity of life and that spirituality of faith and worship in which I feel it such a privilege to have been educated' (658). On the side of those who stay there is the same discernment and generosity of soul. They had passed beyond the stage of toleration. They no longer looked upon themselves as a peculiar people. They could say at last with William Penn: 'the humble, meek, merciful, just and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and, when death has taken off the mask, they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers' (655. 1. 842). As they crossed the name of Samuel Burlingham out of the book of members in 1879, they added these comfortable

words: ' Though he is thus separated from our branch of the Christian Church, we may still be joined in fellowship as members of the universal church which unites in one Body all the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ ' (679).

It is painful to see how the Quakers, as they began to exhibit more tolerance towards their fellow Christians, were themselves recompensed with less. Here, at any rate, some who were followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and many who were not, rejoiced indecently at the decline of Quakerism, and seized so good an opportunity to work off their old scores. For the century or more during which the Friends had ruled Hitchin it had not been easy for their enemies to say just what they felt. But when the leading lights amongst them passed into the Church and the dead hand of Quakerism was removed, the ' mobbish part of the people ' began to ' study destruction and their lips to talk of mischief.' Had they not suffered long enough ' the silent reproof of their better practice '? Were they for ever to be thee'd and thou'd by this singular people? Undersold by these cheese-parers in shop and market? Deprived of the decencies and courtesies of life by the rude, unmannerly plainness of these prigs? It was a pity the Toleration Act had spared them. Still, they could have the pleasure of smashing their windows on Victory nights, and they could pelt them on their way to Meeting. It was Sydney Smith who was wanting about then ' to roast just one Quaker, only one, for the satisfaction of the thing.' But here they desired a holocaust. That blessed consummation the law forbade; but they did take leave and licence on the 5th of November, 1815, to burn in effigy those unpatriotic citizens ' whose hearts had ne'er within them burned,' at the famous victory of Waterloo. On that wild, lawless night, thirty-one respectable townsmen, led by the Clerk to the Justices, the beadle, the church clerk, and a churchwarden, broke into the yard of two Hitchin Friends, feloniously took away a quantity of faggots, heaped them high in the Market-place for all the world to see, hoisted the melancholy figures of the Friends alongside the melancholy figure of old Fawkes, danced round and round with hoots and yells of execration, and made one glorious bonfire of the lot.

The pleasure of this *auto-da-fé* was somewhat damped the following morning, for the two Quakers whipped out warrants against the thirty-and-one. It was still more damped at the

next court of Quarter Sessions, when they were required to make restitution and bound over in heavy penalties to keep the peace. But they hated and continued to hate the Quakers none the less. The present writer has a lively memory of one choleric and picturesque townsman who was constantly wishing aloud that he might ' wake up one morning and find the lifeless forms of

THE QUAKER WHOSE EFFIGY WAS BURNED

the whole gang of Hitchin Quakers dangling from the chestnut-trees in Bancroft.' To him, in Wordsworth's appropriate phrase, they were ' all silent and all damned.' Amongst the town officials also one may trace this growing hostility to the Quakers. When they distrained for tithes, or ' Priest's wages ' as the Friends insultingly termed them, they no longer permitted

the owner to point out what he could best dispense with. They seized what would give him the most pain and inconvenience to lose. If the distress must be chronicled as usual in the Friends' Book of Sufferings, why then, they urged, let it be suffering indeed. And so one finds them taking away necessaries, like half a pound of tea and two handkerchiefs from Mercy Crawley, Mary Sparrow's warming-pan and all her pewter plates, John Thompson's feather-bed, and actually the coconut-matting from off the Meeting-house floor (695).

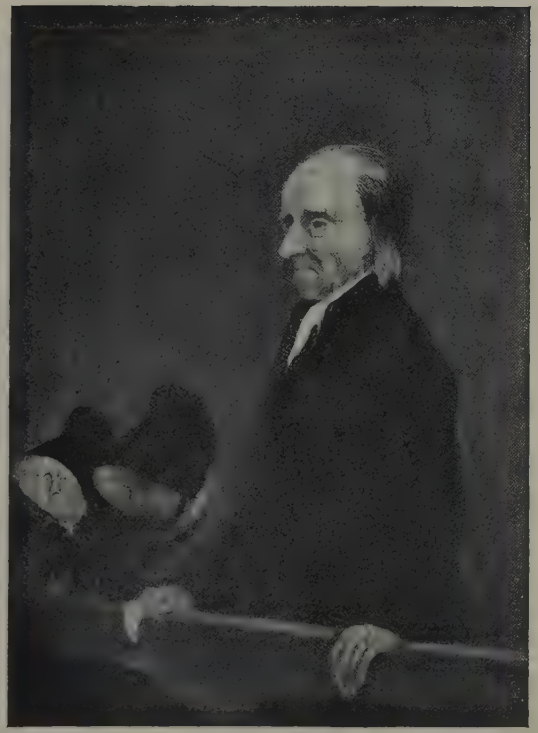
If they thought by these petty persecutions to ruffle the equanimity, or by one hair's-breadth to alter the resolution, of the Friends they were much mistaken. Their grandfathers could have taught them better. All that they did was received uncomplainingly and with a stony silence. It needs a Quaker to take a rise out of a Quaker, and that is seldom tried. So far as the Friends were concerned there was no hitting back. They had been well trained in the tactics of restraint. They knew well enough that silence is the unbearable repartee. There is an evident satisfaction in that comment of Robert Barclay upon those ' proud ones who have fumed, fretted and gnashed their teeth ' against their exasperating unconcern: ' it doth so vex the serpentine nature in the children of darkness ' (645. 361). Apart from that outward satisfaction they had to consider their inward peace of soul. ' It were better,' said the apostle Penn, ' to be of no Church than to be bitter for any ' (655. 1. 843). Also they knew by long painful experience how to lay these sufferings to spiritual account. ' Let it not seem hard to you,' said Isaac Gray of Hitchin, ' to be bowed down and Despicable in the Eyes of men. It is the necessary consequence of faithfulness; a gradual dying to that which otherwise would bring a Total Death upon the Soul ' (676).

XXVII

Samuel and Phoebe Allen

It is characteristic of them that, within two years of the secession of so many of their members in 1836, and in the face of this renewed hostility, they should have erected another Meeting-house twice as large as the first (l). But the revival which they

l. This building, which is still in use, was designed by F. W. Dankes of Gloucester and cost about £2,000. The site was given by Joseph Sharples.



SAMUEL ALLEN

From a painting by Samuel Lucas

PHOEBE ALLEN

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

ardently expected in this spacious Meeting-house was not to be vouchsafed. Rather it seemed as though this little Society more rapidly declined. The dwindling few who sat in the Ministers' gallery looked down with their wise, inflexible faces upon the dwindling many on the members' benches. In spite of its newness, the house seemed haunted with the ghosts of those who had gone. There was a silence as of absent friends, a silence that could be felt. What mere organization could do, that they did. In 1865 they enlarged their borders and introduced new life by amalgamating Hitchin and Baldock Preparative Meetings, Hitchin and Hertford Monthly Meetings, Herts and Beds Quarterly Meeting, and that of Bucks and Northants. Over their own Particular Meeting, moreover, they grew more circumspect. In 1869 they deputed Frederic Seebohm, Alfred Ransom, John Thompson and Edward Sewell ' to visit those who habitually absent themselves from our meetings for worship ' (658). William Ransom was asked to report in 1873 upon the condition of the mid-week meeting: ' The attendance of Men Friends,' he complains, ' is much less, owing to the business competition of the present day; and it must be acknowledged that there is not the same determination to break away from business as was shown by Friends formerly. The absence of our younger Friends is especially marked ' (li) (785).

There in that last sentence lies another cause of decline. In the eighteenth century, as already shown, you have the respectability of middle age falling like a blight upon the Society; and now in the nineteenth there began to be signs of premature old age. Old age with its caution and its love of compromise had come upon them. You may hear it in that adage of Coleridge in his decline so often quoted by a leading Elder of the Hitchin Meeting: ' Truth is a good dog, but beware of barking too close on the heels of an error lest you get your brains knocked out.' In the early days of the Society Friends did not talk like that. No wonder the young men and maidens had departed. Youth will follow the gleam; and to the younger Friends of that time

The sale of the old burial-ground at Ippollitts to Sir Francis Willes, and that of the old Meeting-house in Quakers Alley to Joseph Lucas brought in £740. The balance was ' readily subscribed amongst the members ' (658).

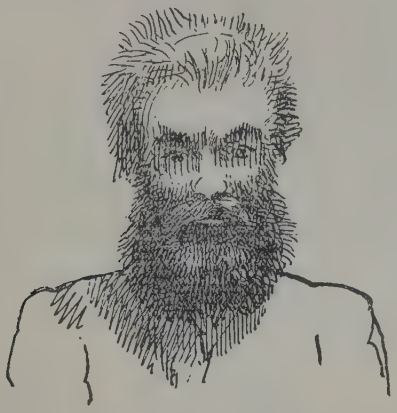
li. ' I wish we could hold more of our meetings in the evening,' observed Samuel Lucas. ' In the morning we are so full of this life, I may say of the pride of life. Towards evening the shadows lengthen, and the mind feels the solemnity of the closing day ' (711).

it seemed as though the vision, the adventure, yea and Truth itself, had gone out from their select Society into the highways and byways of the world. In 1856 the Quarterly Meeting of Beds and Herts set up a committee ' to enquire into the spiritual welfare of the younger Friends '; and Samuel Lucas, as its chairman, issued a report which, if adopted, would have saved many a resignation (764). In the understanding of youth, however, he was in advance of his time. Resigning membership in 1869, his brother, Francis Lucas, had said: ' We shall be glad to have our two children's names retained on the list of members, that they may have the option of remaining Friends, should they wish to do so, when they are old enough to judge for themselves.' That was an enlightened proposition, though to the Monthly Meeting it ' appeared undesirable.' But there was not the least doubt which way those children would go. Epistles came to them, addressed as ' beloved young Friends,' from Yearly Meeting, 1868, bidding them ' uphold the high standard of the Christian by the elevation and refinement of your minds, and by the chasteness and propriety of your outward deportment and attire.' Other epistles, addressed to them from their own Particular Meeting, 1867, advised ' the practice of retirement for the private reading of the Holy Scriptures, lest by the attractive literature of the day and the exciting scenes that surround us you should have your attention diverted from the things which are not seen and are eternal.' In spite of these admonitions, or possibly because of them, they gradually fell away and, ' when they were old enough to judge,' followed their parents into that Church which had so cruelly persecuted their forefathers in the days of old.

' The meetings are cold and lifeless,' said one of these ' beloved young Friends,' ' the Ministers are of another age ' (647. 7). That in a measure was true. To young Friends, the three or four bowed spirits in the Ministers' gallery must have seemed preternaturally old (lii). But they were not by any means as old and lifeless as they looked. One thinks of Samuel Allen, 1771–1868, tottering down to Meeting in his ninety-fifth year ' under feelings of great weakness; yet he thought he *must* revive the words amongst us " ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, wherefore glorify God in your body and in your Spirit,

lii. ' Thy aged grandmother,' writes William Lucas to his son Samuel in 1823, ' continues able to get to meeting pretty frequently in a Sedan ' (711. 1).

which are His"' (647. 8). 'As a child,' said an elderly Hitchin Friend to the present writer, 'my heart would sink within me when Samuel rose up to speak. Never have I heard anything so dismal and unending. Yet if we fidgeted or forgot for one moment to sit upright in our seats we were soundly scolded' (647. 9). 'He was a man,' describes another Hitchin Friend, 'of insignificant appearance, and much disfigured with the smallpox. But in spite of a shattered constitution and a highly nervous disposi-



JAMES BACKHOUSE

tion (liii) he lived to be ninety-seven. 'His life was despaired of at twenty-seven,' as Ralph Lucas once remarked, 'and his death at ninety-seven.' People could never understand how

liii. The least departure from Quaker tradition in apparel or appearance would drive him into agonies of mind. On one occasion, as he arrived at Meeting, he found James Backhouse there, wearing a long beard, a thing which, since it reminded them of John Perrot's extravagances, had always been viewed with displeasure by the Society of Friends. One glance was enough. Turning swiftly on his heels, Allen made for home. On the road he was met by a Friend, who inquired with some concern why he was hurrying away. 'That

he had contrived to win the charming Phoebe Lucas for his wife. In her playful way she would sometimes tell over the number of her suitors and, when she came to speak of the successful one, would say: 'I went through the wood, and through the wood, and took a crooked stick at last.' But she invariably concluded with a warm expression of love to him and thankfulness for the happiness of her married life. Phoebe Allen herself was a Minister for fifty-nine years. 'Endowed in youth,' says her Testimony, 'with liveliness of disposition and high flow of spirits, she affords a striking example of natural vivacity, regulated and restrained by the love and fear of God. . . . In a long course of unobtrusive devotedness she adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour' (712. 45. 5). The quietness of her closing years reminds one again of Mercy Ransom: 'Stillness before God,' she declared, 'is the one thing needful to endeavour after in all God may permit to befall.' Yet before the stillness of her preaching no evil thing could stand. 'Phoebe Allen ministered this morning,' writes a Hitchin diarist in 1851, when she was eighty-one; 'she expressed the feeling very like Him whom the winds and the sea obey. Would there were more like Phoebe Allen amongst us' (757).

XXVIII

Visiting Ministers

Old age and stillness of soul disinclined these two worthies for journeyings afield in the course of their ministry. 'I am well satisfied,' observed Phoebe Allen, 'with keeping my burrow.' And furthermore it was beginning to be felt that the apostolic age was over. But happily for those in Hitchin Meeting there were still Ministers who came to them. Again and again they were visited by Samuel Tuke, 1784–1857, the most eminent Friend of his time, whose sagacity as Clerk to the Yearly Meeting through the critical years of the Beaconite troubles had saved the Society from disaster (853. 2. 795). He as a boy had been educated at the school of George Blaxland at Hitchin. The house of his aunt Elizabeth Wheeler there had been like a second home to him. It was a discourse by an old man named

beard,' exclaimed Allen, 'that beard! I cannot stand it, I cannot stand it!' Apparently Samuel Lucas could not stand it either. In his sketch-book he makes a caricature of Backhouse and the beard, and writes underneath it: 'An approved Minister for the Bushmen.'

Special (liv), at Hitchin Meeting, on the words 'To obey is better than Sacrifice,' that had altered the current of his life. And now at the end of a lifetime in the service of Truth it was pleasant to him to revisit his early haunts. 'The old Friends,' he writes in 1852 after 'a tarriance of three weeks with my son James,' 'the old Friends, the widow Ann Lucas, and Samuel and Phoebe Allen, are beautifully green in old age, and frequently give lively communications in the ministry. But I cannot help inquiring with a feeling of sadness, where are to be found their successors?' Of his own ministrations here he speaks but rarely: 'I attended the Hitchin Meeting,' he writes in 1824, 'where soon after sitting down the passage "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God" arrested my attention. I hoped I might have continued in silence throughout the Meeting, but before the close I felt such an impression of awful necessity to speak, and such an entire abstraction of the fear of the world, that I ventured to rise under a trembling sense of my own greater need to be ministered unto than to minister' (768).

Another prominent Minister who frequented the Meeting in this later period was Benjamin Seebohm (786; 787; 801; 803; 806; 808; 839; 852). He, like Samuel Tuke, had found a second home in Hitchin. Born near Pyrmont in Germany in 1798, he came to England in 1814 through the leading of Stephen Grellet. In 1831, being then a prospering wool-merchant at Bradford and a member of Brighouse Monthly Meeting, he married Esther Wheeler of this parish. After thirty years' service in the ministry, including five memorable years, 1846–1851, in America, he came to rest from his labours in Luton. But even then, broken in health as he was, he found it impossible to rest. He loved to drive over to Hitchin, where his son Frederic—now married to Mary Ann Exton—was in partnership as a banker with James Hack Tuke. And, to use a favourite expression of his, he loved to be 'fruitful in the field of offering and joyful

liv. Writing his memoirs in old age, Tuke remembered the original Christian name and forgot the surname. Special West, 1740–1817, was a son of Friends resident in Southwark, Surrey. In early life he ran away from home, enlisted as a soldier and went abroad. Remarkable preservation steadied him, and on the conclusion of the war he returned to England. In 1773 he married Hannah Hagger and moved from Barking, Essex, to Hertford, and occupied a farm at Northaw. He had very few advantages of education, but became an able Minister. He died at his house at Bengeo.—*Journal of Friends Historical Society*, vol. 23, p. 90.

in the house of prayer.' His impressive figure was rarely absent from Monthly and Quarterly Meeting. He presided over endless committees and issued numberless reports. But it was by his piercing, prophetic utterance, his evangelical passion, his power of ' feeling-out into the states of others,' that he brought a sort of second summer into the winter of this Meeting's discontent. This sad company of ageing people, sitting together in the twilight of despondency, suddenly saw a new light. Whilst they listened to this ' Golden Trumpet of the North,' as he was popularly called, they forgot how cold and lifeless they had been. For a season there was a revival of those ' blessed, heavenly, powerful and thundering meetings,' which their fathers had known so well. They would never see it after this fashion again. ' I have never heard any ministry,' said Whittier, the poet, ' characterized by so much power and unction as that of Benjamin Seebohm. There was a depth of thought in it that appealed especially to cultivated men.'

By an Elder of Hitchin Meeting he was likened, as he well might be, to William Dewsbury, ' whose testimony was such as the earth shook before him, the Mountains did melt at the power of the Lord ' (831. xl). ' My soul was poured out like water, and all my bones shook,' confessed Sybil Jones, who trembled under his ministry in 1850 (853. 895). One smiles to see that the author known as Robert Dudley [probably James Baldwin of Westfield, Indiana], refers to him always as Benjamin *Seefoam*—a fancy name, no doubt, but one that gives a lively and living image of the man. He sailed like a Berserker upon the sea of Truth. The froth of prophetic frenzy was constantly upon his lips. There are some living amongst us still who hold a vivid recollection of his impassioned speech. To the last he maintained the old-fashioned habit of singing or chanting what he had to say. His voice as it rose from the awful solemnity of the silent Meeting would seem to hover motionless for a time, as if communing with itself and uncertain of its way. Then like some mountain eagle it would lazily flap its wings and glide, still brooding, over the lower hills. Suddenly, as if stung by some compelling thought, some heavenly vision out of this vale of tears, it would begin to soar, higher and higher with ever-increasing ecstasy of speed—the round world soon but a speck in the distance, the mountains lost to view—towering up and up to that supernal region where the morning-stars sing together

LONDON YEARLY MEETING, ABOUT 1840

From a painting by Samuel Lucas

Photograph of a painting of a sitting of the London Yearly Meeting of Friends Painted by Samuel Lucas of Hitchin about 1840

Key to the Photograph.

1 William Sewell
2 Gawen Ball
3 Samuel Randell
4 Thomas Shillitoe
5 Daniel Wheeler
6 William Reckman
7 Solomon Chapman
8 Peter Bedford
9 Joseph Neatby
10 Richard Barrett
11 George Jones
12 Richard Cocken
13 Joseph Y. Pruce
14 Jonathan Backhouse
15 William Gundry
16 Jonathan Hutchinson
17 Samuel Yuke
18 William Allen
19 Josiah Forster
20 George Stacy
21 Samuel Gurney
22 William Forster
23 Joseph John Gurney
24 Joseph Marriage
25 John Foster
26 Edward Smith
27 Silvanus Fox
28 Samuel Allen
29 Luke Howard
30 Robert Rusden
31 Rawlinson Barclay
32 Robert Alsop
33 William Jones
34 Isaac Bass

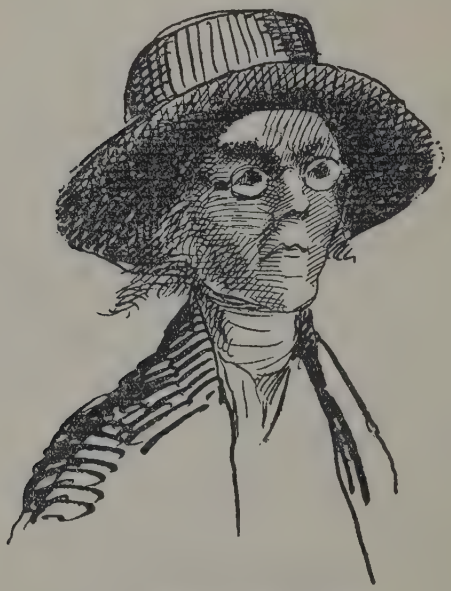
for joy and the Children of Light stand undazzled and unashamed before the throne of God. Awhile on these blessed heights, where only the pure in heart may breathe, then with reluctant wings wheeling down through the interstellar spaces, down to the mountains of meditation, down to the dreaming hills, down, down, down, until it would sink hushed to sleep upon that calm sea of silence out of which it came.

XXIX

Ministers from America

These were the giants of that age of dwarfs. In an unfaithful generation they kept the faith; in a time of spiritual darkness they cherished the Inner Light. But one should not forget those devoted men and women who came from afar upon the self-same service. From New York in 1794 came David Sands on a travelling ministry to Europe of eleven years. A preacher emphatically of the evangelical type, he has been described as 'swept by sudden incursions and possessed of inspirational openings.' Shortly before reaching Hitchin he had burst into a dancing-hall and treated the astonished revellers to an address they were not likely to forget: 'My friends, for what purpose is this gay company assembled? Is it to worship Almighty God; him from whom all your favours and blessings flow . . . or have you rather suffered yourselves to be led captive by the enemy of your soul's peace, who for a season may hold out bright and pleasing allurements to tempt your unwary feet to stray from the true fold of peace?' (853. 282). From Stanford, in New York State, in 1811 came Henry Hull, 'whom the Lord in his inscrutable wisdom saw meet to prove very closely in removing by death his aged mother, his wife and his eldest son, whilst he was ministering in England' (744). From New York also in 1812 came Stephen Grellet, the Spiritual Guide of Benjamin Seebohm—indeed, one might add of the Society itself. It was said of him, and said truly, that 'he entered so deeply into sympathy with afflicted humanity that it felt as if his own soul was brought into their souls' stead' (767. 1. 318). In this his second journey to Europe he travelled over 26,000 miles and attended as many meetings as there were days in the three years he was absent.

Oversea from Hopkinton, Rhode Island, in 1832 came that stormy petrel, John Wilbur, who for fifteen years had seen in the spirit 'this visit to the seed' in England, and who resolved whatever might befall to winnow that seed again. Just before coming to Hitchin he had sat through London Yearly Meeting, 'suffering silence,' weeping much, for his tears came easily, and reflecting in his soul 'that great professions of faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ do not of themselves bring a savour of



LINDLEY MURRAY HOAG

life, precious Sweetness, or weight, solidity and power to a meeting.' After a time, however, the tears gave place to the *saeva indignatio* of the prophet. Wrapping his mantle about him, he denounced their 'departures from the ancient truth'; their 'joining with the hireling clergy and others for the promotion of religion by spreading the Scriptures'; their launching out into foreign missions; their interference with the work of God by 'human preparations' instead of 'waiting for the promise of the Father'; and, above all, their throwing down of 'the hedge,

the fenced wall of discipline' in plainness, speech and attire (853. 511–14).

From New England in 1845 came a more gracious ambassador of Christ in the shape of Lindley Murray Hoag. By one of his admirers he has been described as 'recently widowered, very eloquent, with such an attractive countenance and personality that we fell under his spell at once, drew his portrait, and followed him from meeting to meeting. After a time it was considered advisable that he should return home for a while until the *furore* had abated' (816. xi. 17). For his second coming the way was more carefully prepared. When he appeared in his glory at Yearly Meeting, Esther Seebohm is said 'to have made some nice remarks, not doubting that we should all be willing to forgive an erring brother . . . and cautioned women Friends against so much following about and admiration of poor Instruments, and that they might not be content with a superficial view of things which led to this sort of conduct'; with which nice but cutting remarks the wings of this angel-minister were clipped. Finally, from New England in 1868 came Eli Jones, one of the best-known Ministers of his time, and dedicated like Woolman to the cause of the coloured race. He and Sybil Jones, whom Seebohm had convinced, were on their way to found those mission stations at Brumana and Ramallah in Palestine which have continued unto this day (lv) (853. 905).

However serviceable these ministrations may have been, we must not lose sight of the fact that Hitchin Meeting as a Meeting was coming to matter less and less. One discerns a shifting of the emphasis about this time from faith to works. It is as though the Society was growing aware that it had been living on itself too long. It was dying—a slow, delicious death, no doubt, but dying none the less—of introspection, of self-esteem, of Quietism. 'Nothing,' said Esther Seebohm in 1864, 'can exceed the quietness of my mind' (712. N.S. 24. 234). Of this slow decline the causes are not far to seek. For one thing there had been far too much intermarriage amongst the

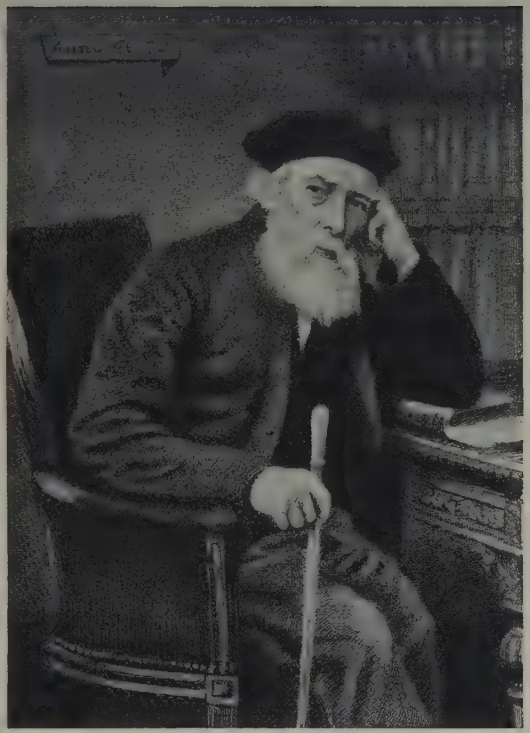
lv. For the sake of the American readers of this book I will set down the names of some other Ministers of the New World who visited Hitchin: William Matthews and Ann Jessop from North Carolina, 1785; George Dillwyn from Philadelphia, 1788; Joseph Cloud from North Carolina, 1803; Benjamin White from Pennsylvania, 1818; Daniel Williams from Indiana, 1857; John L. Eddy from Ohio, 1861; Susan Howland from New Bedford, 1859; Rachel Binford from North Carolina, 1878.

members, intermarriage of body and intermarriage of mind. There had been an unhealthy shutting of themselves up as a peculiar people, so that it was difficult, at least for younger Friends, to breathe. Then again there had been so much concern to die becomingly that they had overlooked the necessity to live. With a recognition of the danger there was a beginning of the cure. After the sixties one hears less and less of those interminable, introspective Journals. The ' bestowing elaborate Encomiums upon Persons deceased ' is not so much encouraged. There is less craving for a place in *Piety Promoted*. The Meetings dwindled; one by one the aged Ministers were carried to the grave; but the life of the Society, released for service in the world and rejoicing once again in new-found contact with reality, abounded more and more. The one was to increase, the other to decrease.

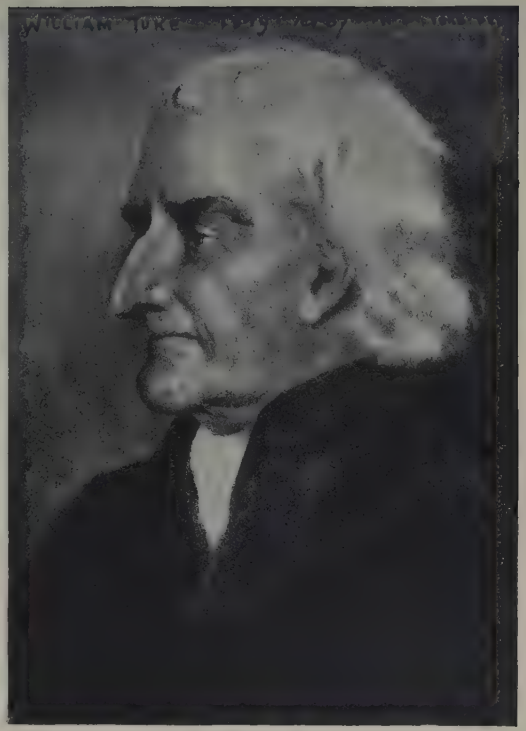
XXX

Peace and Anti-Slavery Work

When Esther Wheeler of Hitchin was in attendance on her blind grandfather, William Tuke, 1732–1822, whose portrait with that of Seebohm fronts this page, she would sometimes read to him. On one occasion, after finishing the life of a Quaker Minister in which the concluding scene was summarily treated, she remarked how little was said concerning the death of so worthy a man: ' I reckon nought of that,' observed Tuke, ' a man's *life* is his Testimony ' (786. 112). Rightly or wrongly, the Hitchin Quakers of this last half-century have been of the same mind as William Tuke. Their testimony has been a living reality, and not a thing of the dead. Never has there been such losing of the individual life to find it again in the world. Never has there been such a getting-down to the problems of evil, destruction and death. One can mark the change by the altered attitude of Friends to war. It was not enough, they felt, to witness against this with the passive resistance of the century before. They must be up and doing, actively engaging themselves to end this accursed thing. To arouse the conscience of the people, the ' Peace Society,' already referred to, was promoted. Like other Societies it had its day and ceased to be; its minutes are often uninspiring: ' 1851. Peace Meeting at Joseph Lucas's in



BENJAMIN SEEBOHM



WILLIAM TUKE

evening. A considerable discussion on gravestones' (lvi). But it has to its credit something attempted and something done. In 1841 an appeal was made to the Archbishop of Canterbury 'to expunge from the articles of the Episcopal Church the statement [see Article 37] that Christians are not forbidden the use of carnal weapons.' 'The Apostle,' as he was respectfully reminded, 'says otherwise.' In 1851, when there was to be 'a blasphemous consecration of colours by the Archbishop of Paris and a Military Fête,' some members volunteered to visit that city and distribute copies of the Epistle of St. Peter, not only to the French soldiery but to civilians too; 'for there is

SAMUEL ALLEN READING 'THE HERALD OF PEACE'

said to be a great eagerness on the part of many Catholics to obtain the New Testament' (718). Meantime, individual members of the Society were doing what they could. 'It brought tears to my eyes,' said Samuel Allen, 'to see the Recruiting

lvi. It was customary to have no head-stones in Friends' burial-grounds. But in the fifties a movement was set on foot by John Thompson of Hitchin and others for the adoption of unassuming semicircular memorials, all of one size and shape, which, with some misgiving and some further diminution, were finally adopted (851. 417).

Sergeant at work in Hitchin '; but he dogged his footsteps none the less and seditiously spread tracts entitled *Rhymes for the People* and *Hints about the Army* in his train (647. 8). Not soon forgotten either was the dignified protest made by Frederic Seebohm against the erection of a monument to Prince Louis Napoleon in Westminster Abbey.

Another change is to be observed. For the first time these appeals and protests met with some attention. This may have been due to the better organization of the Society; but more likely it resulted from the remembrance of those in authority that Thomas Shillitoe, William Allen and Stephen Grellet had been received in audience and held in esteem by some of the chief monarchs of Europe. In the memory of our Court at least rang that cry of anguish from the death-bed of George IV: 'Oh! that Quaker—that Quaker!' The bishops and archbishops who came to usher him into the next world had done nothing for him in this world but speak glozing, comfortable words. Why had they not shown him the error of his ways? It was Shillitoe alone who had dared to tell him the truth (836. xi. 195–200).

If one passes on to study the part played by these Hitchin Quakers in the emancipation of the slaves, the change is equally apparent. The concern which had moved the indignant soul of Shillitoe to journey over the sea and beard the slave-owners on their own plantations was now become the concern of every member. '1779. Paid W. Forster towards obtaining information for the abolition of the Slave Trade, £25.' At a Town's Meeting summoned by Hitchin Friends in 1826 a petition was drawn up and afterwards presented to Parliament 'for the mitigation and final abolition of slavery throughout the British Dominions,' which by a Statute of 1834 was finally accomplished. The Hitchin Anti-Slavery Society, founded at that time, busied itself in printing and circulating the speeches of Thomas Clarkson. The more influential Friends waited in season and out of season on the Hertfordshire members of the House of Commons to see if they could goad them into action. The humbler souls helped on the cause by abstaining from sugar as the main product of slave labour (lvii). Some even contemplated giving up the use

lvii. 'I recollect,' notes Phoebe Lucas Glaisyer in the manuscript account of her childhood, 'the peculiar flavour given to gooseberry or apple puddings when sweetened with honey, there being no sugar on the table. They were not nearly so nice' (803*a*).

THOMAS WHITING READING 'UNCLE TOM'S CABIN,' 1852

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

of soap for the same reason. Of more immediate value was the relief work which many undertook. A generation earlier it had been thought enough to subscribe a few perfunctory shillings 'for fugitive slaves from America.' Now, Friends were eager to receive these refugees into their own homes (lviii). By a series of public readings which Thomas Whiting gave of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* soon after the publication of the book in 1852 that eagerness was increased a hundredfold; indeed, the whole town was taken as by storm. Long afterwards men would speak of it as the greatest moment in their lives (lix). Some faint impressions of the unforgettable scenes witnessed in the cottage in Hollow Lane where the readings were given survive in a hasty sketch made at the time by Samuel Lucas, and in a poem of William Lucas which opens with these lines:—

'Listen! there is someone reading
In that cottage dark and low
To a breathless audience, feeding
On some tale of human woe.

Through this cranny take a peep—
Such a group you ne'er beheld;
Slut and ragman, tramp and sweep,
All their vulgar clamour quelled.

See the quiet tears are stealing
Down each soiled and rugged face,
From some hidden founts of feeling,
From some fresh-touched spring of grace.'

As some sort of counterblast to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the slave-owners spread the report that the freed slaves in Liberia were becoming slave-owners in their turn. 'Sad news if correct,' observes a Hitchin Elder in his diary (757). But no one was deceived, and no one rested from his labours until the conscience of the whole world was cleared from this unholy traffic.

lviii. The late Edwin Ransom remembered one of these escaped slaves, Henry Highland Garnet, so-called, being entertained by Mrs. Exton at Grove Mill House. He was persuaded by William Ransom to go behind the sofa where the negro sat and stroke his woolly hair, just to make sure that it was real (859. 2).

lix. Uncle Tom himself [the Rev. Josiah Henson, so called] visited Hitchin in 1877 and gave the story of his life in a public lecture.

XXXI

Philanthropic and Mission Work

With these Friends, however, to rest from one labour was only to be liberated for another. There were so many evils from which humanity waited to be freed; indeed, the multiplicity of good works about this time is quite amazing. For Edward Pease, who was frequently at Hitchin Meeting, it was too amazing. In his diary, under June 1, 1853, he says: 'I sometimes fear something like a feverish philanthropic delirium may be becoming wastefully prevalent over that life which is hid with Christ in God. Societies for promotion of peace, for the use of only free-grown cotton, an Olive Society, Ocean Penny Postage, anti-slavery action carried to great extent in the attentions to Harriet Beecher Stowe, and total abstinence meetings, absorb many and drink up, I fear, the life of God' (824. 305).

Here at Hitchin the Friends founded a Lying-in Charity in 1796, a Provident Institution in 1815, a Female Saving Society in 1823, a Society for Superseding the Necessity of Climbing Boys in 1829 (lx), a Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor in 1831, and a Society for the Provision of Invalid Kitchens in Back Street in 1868 (52). Without any such Society at his back, James Hack Tuke, 'under a sense of individual duty,' worked year after year in the famine-stricken areas of Ireland (790; 793; 810). In the same solitary way that 'well-approved Minister,' Joseph S. Sewell of Hitchin, 'leaving the statesmen of the Society to debate the question whether missionary work could be undertaken without surrendering the Quaker faith in individual guidance,' and leaving his family to the care of God, set out 'with venturing faith' in 1865 upon his 'mission of love' to the island of Madagascar (846; 864). Sewell and others, having proved that Friends could do effective missionary work by actually doing it, a Friends' Foreign Mission Association was

lx. In converting public opinion, and in demonstrating the effectiveness of the new mechanical appliance for sweeping chimneys, Hitchin, under the leadership of John Thompson, Benjamin Collins and Dr. Oswald Foster, is said to have done more than any town in England. From his early youth Foster's heart had been afflicted by the brutal treatment of these climbing boys. A daughter of his has described to the author how, whilst the boy climbed up the chimney of his house in Bancroft, he himself would set his longest ladder to the chimney-stack, climb laboriously up it rung by rung, with a glass and a decanter held rather precariously in one hand, and, as soon as the half-suffocated lad emerged, would give him a reviving draught of his very best sherry.

founded in 1868 to support and extend their efforts (853. 954). In its infancy the Association was administered from Hitchin, for James Hack Tuke became its first Treasurer, and its successive Secretaries, Watson Grace, Charles Linney and William Wilson, all made their homes in the town. It was by their wise ordering that Lucy Sewell left for Madagascar in 1872 to marry William Johnson and assist him in carrying on her father's work—a service in which they were ' faithful unto death '; for after twenty years of devoted service they and their little child ' Blossom ' were barbarously done to death in a rising of the natives in 1895 (807; 846; 864). It was under the same auspices that Maria Feltham of Hitchin in 1880 followed the example of Eli and Sybil Jones and dedicated her life to those missions at Brumana and Ramallah which they had founded (879).

Servants and Ministers of Christ though she and Sewell were, they laboured not for the conversion of the heathen, so miscalled, but for their enlightenment as children who sat in darkness. It was in schools and training colleges that their main work was done. One sees a similar concern amongst the Friends at home. Education and more education; that in their judgment was the one thing needful. There was an indwelling of light in every man. There was no need to bring it down from heaven to earth. But there *was* need to purify and clarify the earthly tabernacle, the ' poor instrument ' through which that light must pass. Here was another departure from the eighteenth-century tradition; an end to the Society's contempt for ' carnal learning '; an end to that ' guarded education ' which had guarded their sons and daughters from everything, even from education itself. In 1736, when the Clerk of Hitchin Meeting, replying to a Query, asserted that ' our children are accomodated with nessisari Larning,' the standard of education was no higher than his spelling. Now, for the first time, the gates of knowledge were to be flung wide open, and Fox's noble plea for ' the teaching everything civil and useful in creation ' was to have its perfect way (829. 2. 119). In 1810, sixty years before the State undertook any responsibility for education, Hitchin Friends had set up a Boys' Evening School, ' to be held during the winter months at Thomas Dimsey's house in Dead Street '; and they had agreed to tax themselves at the rate of 4d. per head per week that it might be properly run. An ' Evening School for Females ' was added in 1865 (647. 9).

Meantime, in the fifties Joseph Sharples had founded a school at Sunnyside, which his daughter Eliza ran, and Mary Exton had founded another conducted by herself at Walsworth. In 1860 James Hack Tuke, inspired by the success of Joseph Sturge and William White of Birmingham, persuaded White to visit Hitchin, and with his help instituted an Adult School, the first classes of which were taken by Frederic Seebohm, William and Alfred Ransom, Lucy Sewell, Ann Lucas, Catherine Thompson, and last but not least Mary Thompson, who was the first to volunteer, and taught her class for more than fifty years (766). The photographs of their horny-handed scholars, dressed up in their Sunday best and grouped in their several classes, have been preserved (776), together with their minute-books and registers, the rules of their cottage-garden society, their library, their gymnasium, their cricket and social club, and the account of those few precious pennies which out of a fellow-feeling they saved and sent oversea for the education of the Indians (lxi).

The minute-books and registers deserve a more careful study than we can pause to give. It is in their pages only that one can follow the steady growth of membership up to a maximum of 350 and the class work, Sunday and weekday, of those teachers of the second generation, under whom the School has flourished and continued to the present day: W. J. Fitch, J. Norman Sheppard, William Pierson, Arthur Latchmore, T. B. Latchmore, T. W. Latchmore, William and Alice Payne, Theodore and Eliza Ransom, Esther and Hilda Seebohm, Robert H. Catford, Emily Pepper and Alfred and Alice Latchmore. It is good to see how soon those who on joining ' can neither read nor write,' or who ' write unintelligibly ' or ' read monosyllables but imperfectly ' are made to master the rudiments, and brought, not without labour and sorrow, into the promised land of learning. It is pleasant to notice the preference which these sons of toil exhibit for the useless, exquisite and idle things. When Cranston Woodhead in 1878 ' gave an instructive address on *The Origin and Uses of Coal*,' it is noted by the committee with some pain ' that only one scholar attended the whole time, and one other

lxi. Not quite forgotten evidently was the impression made by Samuel Smith, the American historian, who two generations earlier had convinced both the old world and the new that these Red Indians were the true descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. On the occasion of his visit to Hitchin in 1811 William Lucas gave four guineas ' towards the civilization of the Indian Natives ' (686).

JOSEPH SHARPLES

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

about two-thirds of the lecture'; whereas the year previous, when Frederic Seebohm proposed to give a series of readings from Tennyson 'to a select company of scholars,' the unselected multitude forced their way in and the Workman's Hall was packed. It is seldom that any who entered into the land of promise returned of his own free will or folly into the wilderness again. But some, after much sweat of brow and stammering of tongue, declared they were 'too old to larn'; and some for reasons not so reasonable grew weary and fell away. The *Causes of Leaving* as set down in the register are at times whimsical enough, but some make painful reading. Here is a brief selection: 'Need of rest with advancing years: Rheumatism: Indifference: Desires to have the time free: Physical obstruction makes it difficult to read aloud: Walks with a young woman and cannot come to school: Engaged to be married: Works all the week and likes to be at home with wife and child on Sunday: Emigrated to America: Drink: Killed on the Railway: Joined the Salvation Army: Supposed to have left because others make fun of him: Enlisted for soldier: "Don't want to come again": Gone away for change of air: Joined the Police Force: Unsettled being out of Work: Gone to Wesleyans: Ran away from Hitchin: Left the town as Albert Smith: Enticed away to Church of England Schools' (766).

XXXII

Concern for Education

It is clear from what has just been written that the first thought of Friends was to bring education within the reach of those who otherwise would have received no education at all. Their second thought was to make up for the past and educate themselves; which they proceeded to do with such success that men began to look less on Kendal and more on Hitchin as the intellectual centre of Quakerism. Amongst the Elders of the Hitchin Meeting there were several who wondered where this fresh 'departure' might lead (lxii); but in spite of themselves they felt a certain pride in the scientific eminence of Joseph, afterwards Lord Lister, whom they had known as a boy in Isaac Brown's School at

lxii. The year following the institution of the Adult School at Hitchin Thomas Chalk said to Samuel Lucas: 'I fear that the Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes may lead Friends away from their principles and into too great activity' (711. 5).

Hitchin, and afterwards as a guest in many of their homes (lxiii); in the historical and religious writings of Frederic Seebohm (lxiv); in the art work of Samuel Lucas and Birket Foster (lxv) (800); in the poetry, almost Wordsworthian in its rural charm, of Francis Lucas; in the botanical attainments of William Dawson (799), and the Roman excavations of William Ransom (58). To be painter, philosopher or poet is vouchsafed to very few; but those of humbler intellect saw to it that they employed their talents to the full. 'You cannot do a better service to the world,' said one Hitchin Elder, 'than by bequeathing to it a well-educated family. Let this be your care. The Lord will do the rest' (757). For him the Lord did abundantly above all that he either asked or thought, to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds. But for most families it was a reward sufficient in itself to have the light of learning and the subdued splendour of art within their homes. They did make it their special care. Their tea-parties, formerly spent in silent rumination or small-talk, were now become *salons* of polite literature. Nor were the modern sciences despised. 'Emily Manser drank tea here this evening,' writes the same Elder in 1851, 'and dissected a frog afterwards with Jane' (757). If they walked afield it was with a book in the pocket or a sketch-book in the hand. Some enterprising spirits like Elizabeth Wheeler would drive along the Turnpike Road to Shefford and talk with the poet Robert Bloomfield. In 1819 she was shown the manuscript of *The Farmer's Boy*, which was sold five years later for £14. On the same occasion, knowing that he made Aeolian harps for a living, and a half-starved living at that, she proposed that the poet should make one for her:

lxiii. William Lucas, writing to his son Samuel in 1824, says: 'We have had the gratification lately of having under our roof my much respected cousin J. J. Lister and Isabella with their entertaining little boy.' He speaks of the Isaac Brown scholars in general as 'a nice orderly company of boys and help to fill our Meeting-house.'

lxiv. Most cultivated people have read his *Oxford Reformers*. Many have a bowing acquaintance with his *English Village Community*, but his religious treatises, *The Era of the Protestant Revolution*, *The Facts of the Four Gospels*, *The Christian Hypothesis*, have not received the attention they deserve.

lxv. He had his schooling under Isaac Brown, with lessons in pencil drawing under Charles Parry at the Triangle, Hitchin, and there began a lifelong friendship with Joseph Pollard which caused him frequently in after years to visit Highdown. There are quite a number of drawings and watercolours of Hitchin by Birket Foster still existing, and notably one of the Market-place, reproduced at page 284 of this book (800).

'I am a poor creature,' he told her, 'and my days of activity are past, but I will do my best' (lxvi) (647. 10).

It was perhaps meet and right that Friends should have been so diligent in pursuit of wisdom, for 'she is a treasure unto men that never faileth: which they that use become the friends of God' [Book of Wisdom, vii. 14]. But to one who remembers their austere traditions it is surprising to find them at this period discovering a long-forbidden delight in poetry. They whose ancestors had mistrusted even so mild a work as Thomson's *Seasons* were now ready to trust anything. No poet who ever lived could have been less of a Quaker than Lord Byron; but along with the rest of the world they, too, had been swept off their feet by the impetuous torrent of his verse. He had an almost Satanic attraction for the Hitchin Friends. 'That of evil' in each one of them, so rigidly suppressed, must have risen up in homage to him by whom evil itself was so exultantly expressed. On July 13, 1824, as his funeral cortège passed through Hitchin with a black slave and Greek attendant following behind, John Thompson and some other Friends were privileged for one memorable moment to take up the precious casket enshrining the poet's heart and hold it in their hands. One of the Women Friends was 'scandalously reported to have kissed it; and not without foundation'—for it had been said of her before that she would never visit London out of fear that she might encounter this irresistible monster of a man and commit herself, body and soul, to him (647. 11). This cult of Byron was, however, a mere passing phase. It is true that fifty years later, 1874, when Tuke engaged Henry Morley to deliver a course of lectures at Hitchin, the professor chose for his theme *The Spirit of English Poetry from the birth of Wordsworth to the Death of Byron*, as if to signify that poetry itself lay buried with the heart of Byron. But meanwhile Phoebe Allen had been redeeming their taste by readings from the poet Cowper, whom she had met while visiting the Smiths of Olney; and Catherine Thompson had been shedding abroad some of her own enthusiasm for the Greek and German poets. In 1887 there was a memorable reading by John Bright (lxvii) from *Paradise Regained*. In 1891

lxvi. The harp which Bloomfield made for Elizabeth Wheeler came later into the possession of Joseph Sharples, who in 1871 gave it to Jane Ransom. It is now in the possession of William Septimus Upchurch of Hitchin. It has Bloomfield's signature upon it.

lxvii. In the religious experience of John Bright there had been a prolonged

Margaret Janson Tuke delivered another course of lectures on the poet Dante.

XXXIII

The New Vision

It is well to emphasize this latter-day concern of Friends for education because of the far-reaching effect it has had upon themselves and upon their capacity for service amongst others. In this matter they have been following the logic of their own decision to come out into the world. The light that was once hidden under the bushel of their 'guarded education' and for the illumination of their Select and Particular Meetings is now 'set in the midst,' a light to lighten the Gentiles. One by one the Shibboleths of their little sect have been abandoned. They have adopted the language and most of the habits of their fellow men. One by one they have learned the arts of persuasion and the power of divine eloquence to move the hearts of men. In the process it may be that something has been lost. But the gain is manifest. Never before has their testimony stood out with so clear and wide a challenge. Never before has the glaring and irreligious light of modern thought appeared so poor a thing beside the purity and whiteness of their light. To dispassionate observers it seems as though the Friends were about to enter into their inheritance at last. On the one hand, there are the multitudes within the Churches whose souls amidst the ritual splendour, the trailing clouds of incense, the surge of festal music and the eloquence of the pulpit are disquieted within them. On the other hand, there are the multitudes outside the Churches whose hope has wellnigh sunk before the pitiless logic of philosophy and the terrible analysis of science (lxviii). On every hand there are the millions who are groaning and travailing in bondage under the scourge of war and destitution

period of despondency and doubt. Then one day Benjamin Seebohm, led as usual by his unerring 'feeling' into the 'secret states' of others, was moved to go and minister to his need. 'From that day to this,' said Bright long afterwards, 'I have had no more doubts' (843).

lxviii. In 1867, eight years after the *Origin of Species* appeared, a namesake of mine, John Green Hine and a good Quaker, attempted the apparently impossible with his *Strict Harmony between Scripture and Geology: A Lecture on the First Chapter of the Book of Genesis to show the strict and entire Harmony that exists between the Mosaic Account of the Creation of the World and the Recent Discoveries of Geology.*

and industrial disease. Here in the midst of these seekers, these men of sorrow and these heavy-laden ones, stands the healing and reconciling Quaker—a man of no self-vaunting sanctity but of a sweet, natural goodness, keenly alive now to the problems of the day and well equipped to confront them; a man with the eyes of a visionary and the willing hands of a worker. Here is the new Query, No. 10, he has set himself to answer since 1911: 'Do you as disciples of the Lord Jesus take a living interest in the Social condition of those around you? What place do you give to personal service for others? Do you seek to understand the causes of social evils and to take your right share in the endeavour to remove them?'

Is it a wonder that the Society of Friends begins to draw all manner of men to itself? 'The freedom that it offers,' as a member of the Hitchin Meeting, Richenda Payne, has said, 'the underlying faith in "that of God in every man" on which it builds, the form of worship it has adopted, bringing a great silence into the throb of modern life, hold an appeal for a world that is overstrained, disillusioned, restless' (861. 8). After two and a half centuries of persecution, particularism and seclusion, it seems as though the outcasts were returning to make a home and a meeting-place in the heart of humanity. Once again the impossible has come to pass. Those whom the world rejected have become a corner-stone of civilization. Those whom the world sneered at as the 'Friends of God' are now acknowledged the world over as the Friends of Man.

A QUAKERS' MEETING

SPORTS AND PASTIMES (i)

'Let us now come to the sports and pastimes, seeing it is fit that a City should not only be commodious and serious, but also merry and sportful.' —WILLIAM FITZSTEPHEN, *Descriptio nobilissimae civitatis Londiniae*, 1598.

I

EING located,' as William Lucas used to say, 'in a very monotonous district,' we have had more need than some parishes to cultivate our 'facetious and unbended intervals.' 'Monotonous' is a word much too severe for this pleasant part of Hertfordshire, set as it is amidst the lovely undulations of the Chiltern Hills. But we have undoubtedly suffered from that flatness of spirit that comes to all dwellers in rural places. We have known the deadly vacuity of country life. It was perhaps worse in the days before we became urban and self-sufficing; but urbanity is by no means a clear gain. You do but exchange the 'agricultural depression' and rustic tediums for the satiety of towns. As citizens you have to put up with what Chapman, our poet, called 'the leaden gravity of money-mongers,' and for the sake of a good example you must practise the seven deadly virtues of the dull. Therefore it is more than 'fit,' as old Fitzstephen said, it is essential to be 'merry and sportful,' to 'quit our lives of solemn trifles and dance awhile in the sun.' Increasingly do we see the value of 'nonsense well-timed and sweet stupidity,' and learn to alleviate the monotonies of life with what Mary, the wise daughter of that William Lucas, called 'the innocent gratifications of this state of being.'

And what now of our fathers in the dark backward and abysm of time—what alleviations did they enjoy? That 'Merrie England' men write of so glibly, is it all a myth, or do you seem to catch in the records, as you read, the music and the laughter of a bygone golden age? For my part I can distinguish only the music of pomp and circumstance: champing of horses, jingling of harness, tourneys and trumpets, hunters and horns, the songs

i. Thanks are due to Lord Desborough, the most versatile of English sportsmen, and to Mr. Ralph Nevill, author of *Sporting Days and Sporting Ways* and *The Merry Past*, for their help in the revision of this chapter.

SKATING AND SLIDING ON LAX'S POND, 1846

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

of the minstrel, the shouts of them that feast. In this royal manor of Hitchin, on the confines of the royal forest, these were familiar sounds. How often would the Minsden copyholder, as he turned his plough at the headland, look up to see the King and his brilliant retinue emerging from Hitch Wood, following the bridle-path to Temple Dinsley, or forward through Maydencroft to Hitchin. You can follow them still in the names of the fields that once belonged to the Baliols or the Kendales; and follow the joustings and revellings with which these favourites entertained their feudal lord, the King: Norman's Bredth, Jakalon, Pageant Field, Ladie Grove, Conquest Close, Battle Piece, Mount Garrison, Knight's Croft, Chamberlayn's Mead and Castle Dyke.

But once that brilliant pageant has swept by, once the castle door of Dinsley has been barred, you hear but little music or laughter in this parish. For the common people it was a stern, unplayful age. Their gaily caparisoned lords might hunt from manor to manor. The birds flew free in the sky. But they were *adscripti glaebae*—bound to the soil—swinking and sweating that they might live and that their masters might play. You may follow them in Tennyson's well-known lines:—

> 'The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
> The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
> The set gray life and apathetic end.'

Even slaves, it is said, will have their saturnalia, and the priest and the prepositus, if they are wise, will wink at them. But such forbidden things must be kept secret and underground. The rumour of them does not come up on any early record. Later on, in the fifteenth century, it does. '1471. It is presented of William Grubbe of Hitchin that he is a common player at dice (*lusor ad talos*) and aids and abets divers riotous persons to play at dice and other unlawful games (*alia joca illicita*) in the cellars of his house against the statutes therefor enacted. And the said William is commanded henceforth not to play at the said unlawful games under pain of 3s. 4d.' (117).

But in earlier days, if the name of a Hitchin man appears on the Rolls in connection with sports and pastimes, it means one of two things. Either he has hindered his lord in the pursuit of his pleasures, e.g. 1308, 'because he would not come to the driving of the lords chase,' and is therefore 'in mercy,' or he has been promoted, out of his status, to be a keeper, huntsman or groom.

Thus in 1325 John Huchyn had the honour to become Edward II's huntsman at the wage of 2d. a day, with a further ½d. a day for each greyhound under his charge. For comparison with that we may cite the appointment as ' otter-hunter throughout the realm ' of Thomas Hardgrove, who in 1461 was given a charge on Hitchin manor for his wage of ' 2d. daily for himself, 1½d. daily for a groom under him and ¾d. each for the puture (O.F. *poture* = nourishment) of 2 greyhounds and ten running dogs ' (114). Under Edward II John Huchyn saw but little hunting, for within two years of the appointment his master was himself run to earth in the woods of Neath. But with Edward III he was constantly at Hitchin. Indeed, the King had such good sport here and was so well pleased with his lodgings in the town that he addressed a Royal Warrant to the Barons of the Exchequer, ' ordering that Luke le Vyntener of Hitchin and Alice his wife should be excused all fines and taxes due to the King up to sixty shillings in consideration of the hospitality he had received on divers occasions ' (ii) (Cal. Close Rolls 1330–3, 273).

With Huchyn, the King's huntsman, came Beverle, the King's esquire, who in time became the King's inseparable companion. We have already noted the grant to him of the manor of Minsden (above, p. 24). In 1368 there was a further mark of royal favour: ' For services rendered freely by him, not without danger of body and expense of substance, the King grants to John de Beverle that he and his heirs male may hunt the hare in all the King's forests, chaces, parks and warrens, using and carrying a parti-coloured horn, to wit of russet and black equally, which the King has given him as a sign of such hunting, to be returned to the King on failure of such heirs male; and in case the said horn shall be stolen or lost, nevertheless that he may hunt as above.

ii. In one of the historical notes of Francis Lucas in the author's possession (53) he suggests that this Luke le Vyntener may have been one of his ancestors. Undoubtedly the forms ' Luke ' and ' Lucas ' are to be found side by side in the Middle Ages, though Bardsley is inclined to give Lucas seniority. *Piers Plowman*, 3498–9, has this couplet:

> ' And al that Marc hath y-maad
> Mathew, Johan and Lucas.'

A. W. Tindall Lucas, who has worked for some years on the pedigree and historical origins of the family (see 862) is of opinion that they are descended from a John Lucas who in the late twelfth century was a citizen of Rouen. The name Lucas is common in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, and has been associated with the tribe of the Leuci, who dwelt between Paris and the Rhine.

The King moreover wills that if, in any of the said hunts, he shall have a course or two at the King's deer, or take or kill one or two of the said deer, he shall not be impeached or molested on account of the same. Furthermore, the King, lest he be hindered at all from such game, exempts him from being put on assizes, juries, inquisitions, from appointment as mayor, sheriff, escheator, tax collector, receiver of wool, tenths or other subsidies, arrayer or leader of men-at-arms, hobelers or archers, and from being compelled to take the order of Knighthood against his will' (P.R. 42 Edw. III, pt. II, m. 8).

Six years later, 'on account of the King's special affection for his person,' comes a further favour. Hitherto Beverle in his hunting has been limited to hares. Now 'the said John is licensed during his life to hunt stags, hinds, bucks and does, roebucks and roes, deer and other wild beasts, and to fly all kinds of falcons, to wit falcons-gentil and goshawks, and to fish and fowl in all rivers, stanks (pools) and other waters. Furthermore, he may take fuel, both of dry wood and underwood, whenever he shall enter or pass through the said forests, chaces, parks and warrens, sufficient for his stay there' (P.R. 48 Edw. III, pt. 1, m. 10).

II

By the close of the fourteenth century you find the common people also taking leave and licence to exercise themselves. Other Hitchin field names of this period—Morris Dell, Reel Piece, Nine Corners, Clicketts Close, Pitcher Pightle, Cock Close, Closh Close, Loggatts (iii)—show the pastimes favoured. You may know the rest from the Statutes passed to suppress them, for even in Edward III's reign those in authority were complaining that archery was almost totally laid aside in the pursuit of games 'alike dishonourable, useless and unprofitable.' The later Statutes, 12 Ric. II, c. 6, and 11 Hen. IV, c. 4, are more specific. On Sundays and holydays all men strong and able of body were to use their bows and arrows, 'and utterly leave playing at the balls, as well hand-ball as foot-ball, and other games called

iii. A game much after the style of quoits, in which a stake is first fixed in the ground, and then logs of wood or bones are thrown at it from a distance, 'and he that is nearest wins.' In the graveyard scene (Act v, sc. 1) Hamlet observes to Horatio: 'Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play loggatts with them? mine ache to think on't.'

quoits, dice, bowling and kails and other such unthrifty games.' In 1477 those ' newly-imagined games ' called half-bowl, hand-in and hand-out and queck-board, were declared to be ' ungracious and incommendable ' and forbidden (17 Edw. IV, c. 3). ' The defense of this Lond standeth moch by Archers,' and those of the King's lieges at Hitchin who refused to practise on Bowman's Close or Butts Close (iv) on Sundays and Feast-days ' as valyant Englishmen ought to do ' were made to suffer the pains and penalties of the law. These penalties were increased in the time of Henry VIII, for it was found that ' sundry new and crafty games,' such as tennis, cards and shove-groat, were being played ' by subtil inventative persons,' and that the cross-bow, hand-gun, hagbut or demi-hake were causing ' the good and laudable exercise of the long bow ' to be ' avoided and eschewed ' (33 Hen. VIII, c. 6 and 9).

It was natural that Henry VIII should insist on the revival of archery, for, if the chronicler Hall is to be believed, ' he shotte as stronge and as greate a lengthe as any of his garde.' No doubt the good people of Hitchin had the chance to marvel at his prowess, for he was constantly in residence at Maydencroft, a sub-manor of Hitchin, which he had inherited in 1509 from his grandmother Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond. In the State Papers one can trace His Majesty engaged in ' those most princely and serious delights ' of hunting and hawking all the day, and at night sending a few shillings from his lodgings to the Hitchin friars, or rewarding those who brought him oranges from Hertford, or licensing Robert Dele ' to import 50 tuns of Gascon wine,' or playing cards with his kinsman, the Marquis of Exeter (267. 1. 1042 and 5. 751).

But in 1523 and again in 1525 two untoward accidents befell the King. ' On the 15th October in the fourteenth year,' says Hall, ' the Kyng lay at Hychen to see his Hawkes flye, and by chance the Kyng's lodgyng was on fyer and he in greate feare but in no jeopardie ' (v) (885. 1. 275). One of our historians,

iv. The Butts on this close were set up under a Statute of 1465, and in 1541 were extended to the new statutory length of 220 yards (33 Hen. VIII, c. 9).

v. It is interesting to think that Hall may have witnessed the King's escape, for he would appear to have kept a school at Hitchin about this time. Roger Ascham, in his criticism of Hall's *Chronicle*, writes depreciatingly of his style, ' wherein many sentences of one meaning be so clouted up together as though Mr. Hall had bene not writing the Storie of England, but varying a sentence in Hitching Schole.'

MEDIEVAL TRIPTYCH: BOWLS, DICE, SNOWBALLING

For sources see the List of Illustrations

though he gives no authority, asserts that the King *was* in the very gravest jeopardy, and ' escaped with not so much as a shirt upon his back ' (53). Then in the latter end of 1525 we read that ' the Kynge folowyng of his Hawke, lept over a diche beside Hychyn with a polle, and the polle brake, so that if one Edmond Moody a footman had not lepte into the water and lift up his head, which was faste in the clay, he had been drowned; but God of his goodnesse preserved him ' (885. 2. 38). Some of our historians, in recounting this episode, have sighed to think what a different course the history of England would have taken if the Defender of the Faith had been left to stick in the mud (50. 2. 47). But we have no time for idle speculations. Whatever we may privately wish, Henry lived on to divorce his wife and decree a judicial separation between England and Rome; and, alas! he sold his manor and came no more to Hitchin. Moody lived on to take his reward of a groat *per diem* out of the Privy Purse. And the River Hiz ran on just as muddily and unconcernedly as ever.

III

For a hundred years and more after Henry's death this parish was given over to Puritanism. Without descending to the depths of austerity and gloom, it certainly bore a ' vinegar aspect.' ' Laughter,' as that arch-puritan Prynne declared, ' is unseasonable, because this is no place, no time, no world for Christians to laugh or be merry in.' It was not for those who sojourned in this vale of tears to indulge in ' lewd and antichristian games.' There were sterner things to do, for the soul of England was to be saved, and Philip, the mighty Antichrist of Spain, was in God's name and by their own right hands to be put down from his seat. Nevertheless, there was still a few left in Hitchin to pelt the Puritans, and bait the bull and bear at Bull Corner (vi), and practise all those other follies and ' polished diversions ' which Stubbes pillories in his *Anatomie of Abuses*, 1583.

vi. When I first came to Hitchin, in 1901, the stake and the ring to which these poor beasts were tied at the Bull House in Bridge Street still survived. In spite of many protests, this barbarous pastime, which its supporters styled ' a sweet and comfortable recreation,' lingered on into the eighteenth century. The latest reference to it in this county is 1776, in a ' Bill of the Expenses of Benjamin Lawrence, one of the Chief Constables of the Hundred of Hertford, in suppressing a bull-baiting at Hertingfordbury ' (72. 2. 136). Mr. Ralph Nevill reminds me that this so-called sport was not made illegal till ' Humanity ' Martin got ' Martin's Act ' passed in 1822.

The more honest recreations of the period have been catalogued in verse:—

> 'To throw the sledge,
> To jump, or leap o'er ditch or hedge;
> To wrastle, play at stoole ball, or to runne,
> To pitch the barre, or to shoote of a gunne,
> To play at loggets, nine holes, or ten pinnes
> To try it out at football by the shinnes' (883. 29).

There was a 'Foteballe close' established at Hitchin in Elizabethan days, but the rabble who favoured this 'bloody and Murthering' game, as Stubbes describes it, preferred to play it in the streets. Sir Thomas Elyot, who was the mirror of correct demeanour, makes it plain that no gentleman's son could play 'footeballe, wherein is nothing but beastlie furie and extreme violence, whereof proceedeth hurt, and consequently rancour and malice do remain with them that be wounded.' He was undoubtedly right, for 'it was rather a friendlie kind of fyghte than a play or recreation,' and it seemed to grow less friendly as time went on. As late as 1772 a writer, describing a great football match between Gosmore and Hitchin, speaks of the ball being 'drowned for a time in the Priory pond, then forced along Angel Street across the Market place into the Artichoke beerhouse, and finally goaled in the porch of St. Mary's Church' (53).

Those who were neither Puritans nor turbulent plebeians sought out quieter forms of pleasure. Sir Edward Radcliffe, who, before he retired to Hitchin Priory, was King James the First's physician, occupied his leisure with primero and chess, though his master had said of the latter: 'I think it over-fond, because it is over-wise and philosophicke a folly.' Thomas Docwra, steward of Hitchin Manor, amused himself with the 'gentle, cleanly and most ingenious' game of billiards at the time when it was played out of doors upon the green. Samuel Atkinson, archæologically inclined, or perhaps impelled by filthy lucre, got the King's licence 'to practise his best arte, endeavours, labour and industrie in digging for treasure trove supposed to be hid or laide at St. Hippolitus near Hitchin' (*Cal. S.P.D.*, Vol. XCIV, No. 31).

King James, both in his speeches and in his *Book of Sports*, issued in 1618, expressed his eagerness 'for delighting the people with public spectacles of honest games, as also for convening of neighbours for entertaining friendship and heartliness by honest

feasting and merriness' (*Somers Tracts*, 3. 270). But what really mattered was the King's sport, and when he came to live near to us at Royston we knew in this parish, which was within his 'preserve' of fourteen miles, how selfish and oppressive he could be: 'Inasmuch as at our late coming into Royston and the parts thereabout for our recreation we have found our game of partridges and pheasants so decaied that the country thereabouts could yield us no sport in that kind; now, knowing that our well-affected subjects, one and all, will be so farre from the spoile and destruction of our game, as they will with all dutifull readiness further the increase thereof, with forbearance of their own delight for our desport, as a speciall means for the preservation of our health; and therefore, seeing that the said spoile and destruction has been occasioned out of the insolence of audacious and irregular persons, we resolve for the time to come to withstand and punish such boldness and contempt' (567. 104).

In 1604 a Hitchin man, Henry Half-hide, was appointed to be Keeper of the King's Game and supervisor of hawking of partridges, herons, etc., in the district of Royston (*Cal. S.P.D.* 1603–1610, p. 114). In 1607 William Fryer was appointed to preserve the King's game within twelve miles of Hitchin and to bring offenders before the King personally or before his Privy Council (*Cal. S.P.D.* 1603–1610, p. 387). The inhabitants were expected not only to forbear from their own sporting inclinations, but to contribute to the keep of the King's hawks and hounds, and to that of his dogs, which were kept in the Charlton hamlet of Hitchin at a farm still bearing the name of Dog-kennel Farm. For many years they chafed over this imposition, until in King Charles's reign they flatly declined to pay. In 1630 the Hitchin Justices told Andrew Pitcairn, Master of the King's Hawks, that they would no longer suffer a levy for the Royal birds. They were willing to be called before the Council to answer for it, and would prove that it was not due. Again, in 1635, they resolved 'to inform themselves of the antiquity of the commission now on foot for the provision of oats, hay and straw for the King's hunting horses and dogs, and in what proportion the same have from time to time been answered' (72. 5. 202). This trifling dispute about oats and hay and straw was but one out of a hundred in the growing quarrel between the Stuarts and their 'well-affected' subjects, which seven years later embroiled the kingdom in Civil War.

IV

From 1642 to 1648 the voice of the sergeant was heard in the land. There was no sound of cricket or stool-ball on the green. That handgun, for which John Woodward of Hitchin had been fined when he killed 'nine pigeons, settled upon a howell of pease,' was now wanted in the war. Nor even when Cromwell pacified the realm do you find any sportsman daring to show his head: '1656. Foreasmuch as His Highness the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth hath taken special notice of the mischiefs, and great disorders which daily happen and are committed in Taverns, Innes and Alehouses . . . the Justices of this County of Hertford are enjoined to take special care for the effectual suppressing of all such alehouse-keepers as are, or shall be, convicted of the prophanation of the Lord's Day by receiving into their houses any company, or of swearing, drunkenness, suffering tippling, gaming, or playing at Tables, Billiard Table, Shovel-board, Cards, Dice, Ninepins, Pigeon-holes, Trunks, or of keeping Bowling Alley or Bowling Green or any of them, or of any other games' (383. 840). 'There be delights,' wrote Milton, 'there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightfull dream.' But for all that the Maypoles were not set up again. They were 'enticements to naughtiness.' And dancing, even morris-dancing, was forbidden: 'It is the Devil's procession. As many paces as man maketh in dancing, so many paces doth he make to go to hell.'

Nor even at the Restoration do you find that abandonment to the long-forbidden fruits of pleasure which might have been expected. True, the Maypole was set up again at the corner of Angel Street (now Sun Street) and Bridge Street. But there was not the same jollity about the young men and maidens who demurely danced around it. In their prim Puritan dress they looked old and serious beyond their years. And they were serious. Were they not 'fallen from grace' and 'convicted of sin' as their long-faced divines had said? How could they dance beneath such a crushing load of guilt? Had not their own pastor Bunyan confessed that 'this did benumb the sinews of my best delight, and did imbitter my former pleasures to me'? (*Grace Abounding*, 21.)

And, besides, they were wicked. Look at the Maypole again It is about midnight on Sunday, the 12th of September. It is

dark, but you can just make out the form of the Vicar of Hitchin as he steals down Sun Street and nails this exposure to the pole: 'It was my fortune the other night to pass through the Regiments of Death,' by which he means the churchyard, 'wheare to my greate Amazement I beheld an unexpected Object, hatefull to every virtuous eye, and the more because it was comitted amongst the Shady Emblems of Mortality. But what is it that the Ranting Gallants of this age will not performe when to satiate theire unjust desires they do not scruple to act the heinous crime of Fornication even in the presence of God before his Sacred Temple, which ought not to be polluted with the least of unchaste thoughts, much lesse to the unjust and luxurious sinns of the Wicked. For my parte I should have thought it as greate a Sinn in me if I had concealed this Accion, and for this reason was resolved to expose them, but with such Care and Modesty that only their vice might appeare and not theire Names, for to brand them with infamy would be irrevocable and leave a lasting degradation on theire succeeding progeny. Noe (I call God to Witness) my designe is only to admonishe them of theire future duty towards God, it being my earnest desire that they would avoyd the like Occasion of Reproofe and take warning before 'tis too late. For there is an All-seeing God which will severly punish at the dreadful day of Judgment the Workers of Iniquity. Then shall they not escape, but receive open punishment for this and all their secret sinns, unless they truelly and sincerely Repent and for the tyme to come Resolve to lead a Godly and holy life without Spott or Blemish, which God of his mercy grant through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen' (vii) (484. 185 v.).

Come now into the Market-place, and behold a man who *does* lead a godly and holy life. You may almost tell him by the uprightness of his walk. He is Edward Hurst, better known as 'Holy Hurst of Hitchin,' a Deacon of the Tilehouse Street Baptist Church. As he enters the square some mountebanks are exhibiting, and a fellow townsman runs up to him and begs him to stop and see them. But Holy Hurst averts his head. 'Turn away mine eyes,' he murmurs, 'from beholding vanity' (383. 646). But there again was the trouble. There was vanity

vii. This paper was 'taken from thence by Jas. Lawrence the next Morneing,' but not before the scandal of it had spread throughout the parish. To make the more sure of his accusation the Vicar copied it afresh and filed it amongst the archidiaconal records, where it may be read to this day.

whichever way he turned. ' He that shuns trifles,' said our poet Chapman, ' must shun the world.' If he fled from the square by way of Cock Street, there were touts crying the odds on the game-cocks as they fought in the meadow, and even in the parlour, of the Cock. If he escaped by the Church path there was John Law ' galloping his horses in the Churchyard in contempt of the Ecclesiastical Constitutions and to the scandal, offence, and

AN ACROBAT IN HITCHIN MARKET

pernicious example of the faithfull ones of Christ ' (484. 222). Bucklersbury was barred, for a crowd outside the Red Lion was ' having sporte galore in the way of a riatt.' And Angel Street was thronged with a multitude of the unheavenly host swarming out of the bowling-green, or from seeing the Siamese twins of Mary Fisher of Gosmore on show for 1½d. at the Sun.

V

In the eighteenth century you may observe an increasing diversity of pastimes and an increasing latitude on the part of

THE COCK YARD

From a painting by Samuel Lucas, 1845

those in authority. Football, however, was still under a cloud; for in 1685 some Hitchin youths had been 'asked to play at football, but that was not the business: 'twas to goe and be listed for the Duke of Monmouth' (72. 1. 353). No one who went through the bloody fight of Sedgemoor or the Bloody Assize of Judge Jeffreys cared to play that game again. It was better to stay at home and indulge 'those glorious manly pleasures of being very drunk and very slovenly,' which Wycherley noted as characteristic of the age. Those who could afford the five guineas' subscription—the Radcliffes, the Hales, the Spencers—joined the Royston Club, which had been founded at the Restoration 'in 2 handsome rooms behind the Red Lion inn,' loyally decorated with portraits of the Stuart Kings, 'a good head of Dr. Savage (viii) and over the chimney a Judgment of Paris.' 'They settle all the affairs of the county,' writes Defoe in 1704, 'and carry all before them, though they behave with something more modesty, or at least closer than in former days. They used to drink excessively and do a thousand extravagant things' (10. 18. 358).

Those townsmen of Hitchin who had no guineas to waste upon their pleasures managed, nevertheless, to get over to Royston each September for the races. There was more in it than racing, for in the evening the Red Lion had 'its assemblies and cockings,' and the main, or contest of fourteen cocks a side, between the gentlemen of Cambs and Herts, frequently developed into a free fight between the fighting men-cocks of those rival counties (567. 163). In addition to the Royston races there were those on Lilley Hoo. 'Here,' writes Salmon in 1728, 'they make a four-mile course of two rounds upon a good turf, but the turnings are too short' (10. 155). Sometimes the takings were too short. '1775. Information of Martha Lord that she had a booth upon Lilley Hoo during the races, and on Wednesday she left the said booth and delivered to her husband, John Lord, a pair of pockets in which was a sum of 40s. and more. Information of Thomas Dudley that he was in the booth all that evening and saw William Wentworth and James Dean come in and ask for a glass of gin. They then sat down to drink the beer they had brought with them

viii. Savage, 'the Aristippus of the age,' was the first Chaplain of the Club, and famous for his wit. In his younger days he had travelled to Rome and elsewhere with James, the fifth Earl of Salisbury, who afterwards gave him the wealthy living of Clothall. At a levée he was asked by George I why, if he was so long at Rome, he did not convert the Pope; to which he replied, 'Because, sir, I had nothing better to offer him' (567. 161).

at a table on which was a lighted candle. One of them designedly put out the candle by throwing it down, at which time the said James Dean was sitting by the said John Lord, who was asleep. About half an hour afterwards the said John Lord awoke, and told the informant he had had his pocket picked of a double pocket containing all the money his wife had taken that day' (72. 2. 132).

Here and there, however, especially amongst the Quakers, you light upon those

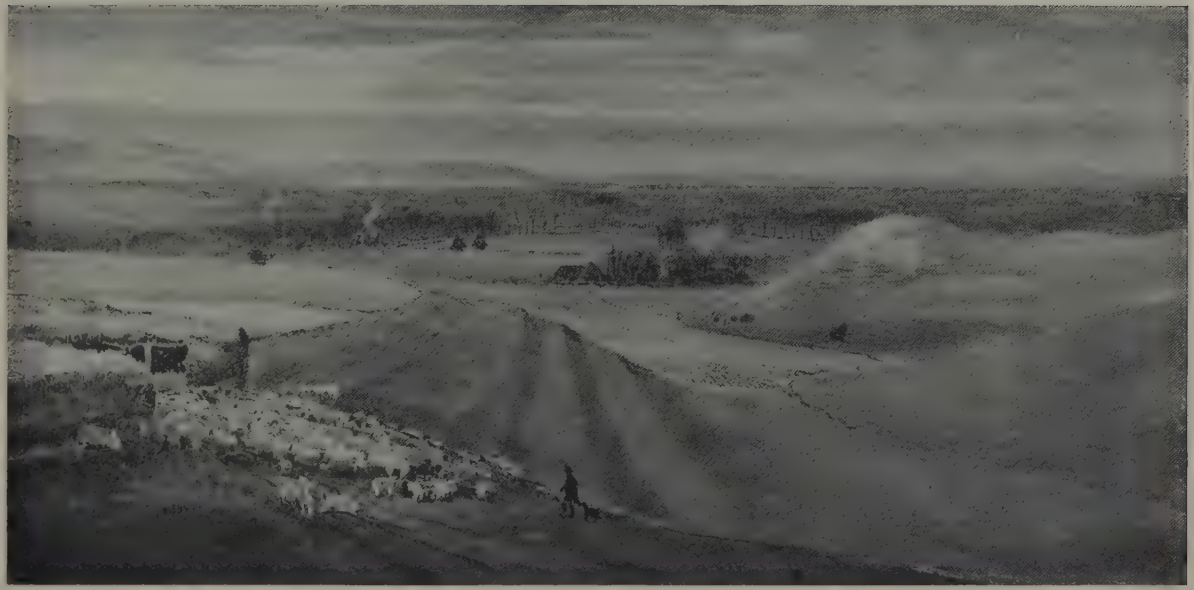
> 'Whose master-bias leans
> To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes.'

Sick of the endless brutality of sport, they were discovering how delightful it was simply 'to take the air.' There is an old saying that 'whosoever buys a house or land in Hertfordshire pays two years' purchase extraordinary for the goodness of the air.' By the eighteenth century the London physicians were prescribing Hitchin as a health resort—'the English Montpellier,' as Dr. Fothergill described it—and were sending patients here to bathe in the Charlton springs and roam on the Pegsdon Hills. If the hardy natives needed an ulterior purpose to lure them out to walk, well it was there in plenty. Dunnage speaks of the green lane leading up to Preston: 'It affords a pleasant walk for the recreation of persons resident in the town' (28. 8). But, apart from 'its salubrious air, enchanting, extensive views and variety of shades,' there was the chance always of a gossip about Bunyan with one or another of the Foster brothers, or, when they were dead and gone, one could march up and down the gazebo of Preston Castle with Captain Hinde and listen to the old warrior fighting his battles over and over again. If you sauntered out of the town in the opposite direction, you stopped by the edge of Wilshere's farm 'to admire the old willow tree bearing an oak, an ash, a currant tree and a briar' (28. 312). Moreover, you could sit very comfortably on one of its lower branches and watch the town cricketers trying to slog sixes into the river.

William Evetts, who flourished here as a physician and antiquary about 1730, used, when his day's work was done, to walk out to the Danish Encampment,

> 'Where the quiet coloured end of evening smiles
> Miles and miles.'

But he would not allow himself to be blinded by the beauty of



THE DANISH ENCAMPMENT

From a painting by Samuel Lucas, 1848

the sunset. He kept his eyes open for those coins he loved to collect. A silver penny of Offa could often be picked up in the fields, and had not a common labourer of Walsworth unearthed a glorious specimen of Cymbeline (ix) attached to a horse-radish root in his garden? On the great days when Dr. Ducarel, 1713–1785, the Lambeth librarian, came to stay, they would make for the Six Hills and excavate and speculate. And so home to Evetts' little library in Bancroft to drink Madeira (x) and plan a *History of Hitchin* (868).

Another of our antiquaries, Maurice Johnson (see above, Vol. I, pp. 62–3), when he had finished collecting the Hitchin Manor rents or tired of writing his *Life and Writings of John Milton* (where is that manuscript now?), would exercise himself in the Priory Park, where he had persuaded Sir Ralph Radcliffe to revive the departed glories of archery. Samuel Scott, the Hertford Quaker, who sojourned here so often for his health's sake, would pace gently up and down the higher and more secluded pastures of the Park. Here is an extract from his *Journal*, dated 1st day sixth mo. 1784, 'Walking this evening in the meadows near Hitchin town in great lowness of body and mind, these words were immediately suggested, viz. *Jesus, the fairest of ten thousand.* A bare and lifeless remembrance of them only now remains; but at the time the impression of them was so powerful as to produce tears of contrition: a favour I had not experienced in my rural retirements for many days' (708. 105). The Radcliffes, if not hunting, were to be found with the Lyttons, the Brands, the Beckfords, the Hales and the Wilsheres, at a club known as the Welwyn Club, which they had founded at the Swan in that parish when the Royston Club had ceased to be. Its minute-books, which are now in my possession, show that a change had come over the boisterous behaviour of the country squires. Instead of the 'excessive drinking and the thousand extravagances' which Defoe had satirized, you have it 'resolved that at 8 o'clock any member may be at liberty to call for tea and cards.' A book club is established in 1796. The members are all for peace. '1800. The 5th day of June Mr. Collison bets Mr. Townsend

ix. Obverse: helmeted head, legend *Cunobelini*. Reverse: a sow, legend *Tasciovanii* (972).

x. Ducarel was a great judge of wine, and used to say that he never knew a man till he had drunk a bottle with him. Evetts always ordered through him. 'Let the Madeira,' he writes, 'be of the strongest sort and good against the gout' (868).

a doz. Port wine that Peace takes place on or before Xmas day next, the wine to be furnished at the ensuing Club. At same time Kortwright bets Croke a haunch of buck Venison (xi) in due season that Peace takes place within same space of time. And it is *Resolved by the Club* that, at the meeting following the event of peace, we the parties of this day, inviting all our brethren to join us, do furnish a festival on that happy occasion ' (869).

VI

' Cards and Tea.' All the long winter afternoons and nights —cribbage, piquet and whist. Sometimes on Sundays, too, even with strict-going Quakers; or, at least, an apologetic compromise of whist and Bible-study. Amongst the Lucas papers (711) there is a fascinating pack of playing-cards in which the books of *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Samuel* and *Kings* are made to serve for the four suits, whilst the court-cards are embellished and made tolerably innocent with drawings of Scripture scenes, with mock-elucidatory couplets scribbled underneath. For example, there is the murder of Abel, in which Cain is depicted as a hairy cave-man brandishing a club:

> ' The card before you on the table
> Is Cain a-pitching into Abel.'

There is another of the Flood, with the animals going two by two into the Ark, and Noah's flag flapping in the hurricane of rain:

> ' Walk up, ladies and gents, the ark will sail
> To-morrow morning early without fail.'

In another you may discern young David harping before the King, whilst Saul sits gloomily upon his throne, fingering his bow and arrow:

> ' David's vocal performance doesn't suit him,
> And consequently Saul attempts to shoot him.'

There is the harrowing scene at Endor:

xi. It was a long-established custom on the part of the Hitchin tenants of Trinity College, Cambridge, to send their landlords a haunch of buck venison every Michaelmas. ' And on the renewal of their leases,' as the great Dr. Bentley remarked, ' I believe they have been no losers by it.'

SUPPER AT THE SWAN

From a sketch by Samuel Lucas, 1845

'In undress uniform Saul went one day
To Endor, but he wished he'd stayed away.
Into futurity he had a peep,
And Samuel's ghost struck him all of a heap.'

And there is the last sad scene of all in the bloody Battle of Gilboa:

'Saul finds his party regularly floored,
To save himself he falls upon his sword.'

In writing of an increasing latitude on the part of the authorities in the eighteenth century, I was referring mainly to the clergy. But one must make an exception of Francis Bragge, vicar from 1689–1728. In pulpit and out of pulpit he was always quoting Scripture against the pleasures of the young: 'I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth it?' 'What a Cruel Damp,' he remarks in a sermon on the *Regulation of the Passions*, 'will it be, in the Midst of all his Delights, to think that for all this God will one day bring him to Judgment. This will Embitter everything and the poor unhappy creature will have nothing but a meer Out-side of Felicity with Gall and Wormwood within.' Evidently he was the pattern priest of a pattern bishop; for, according to Swift, Thomas Tenison, then Bishop of Lincoln, was 'a very dull man who had a horror of anything like levity in the clergy, especially of whist.' So had Holy Hurst of Hitchin who, being invited to play cards, replied by sending a copy of the resolution passed in 1711 at the Assembly of the General Baptists: 'that playing at Cards and Earnestly Contending for the same in Christian famelys is unbecoming and Unlawfull for such as profess the Gospell of Christ and Unfitts them for Church Communion' (xii).

Fortunately for the parish the Rev. Mark Hildesley, vicar from 1731–1755, was quite human. He knew well enough that men cannot live by sermons alone. There is need of cakes and ale,

'And such kind helps
To laugh down time and meet age merrily.'

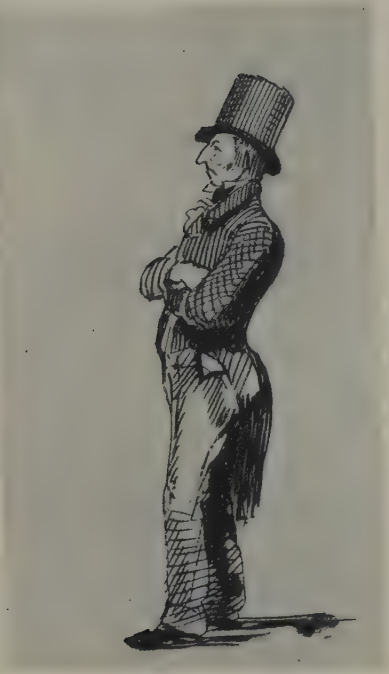
xii. The Baptists were very clear and outspoken about the vanity and pride of life. Here is another of their considered opinions on the moot point 'whether it was expedient for Christians to go a Fox-Hunting.' '1790. It is not of good report, is a waste of precious time, is expense ill applyed, frequently exposes the person to temptation, will lay a stumbling-block in the way of enquiring souls, is a gratification of Carnal nature, nor will it be for the glory of God, and cannot be done without injuring the property of others. Consequently it is the duty of every Christian to refrain from it.'

When the boys whom he tutored in the room over the south porch climbed up the tower after jackdaws' nests, or dropped pebbles down the pipes of the organ, he would not always chide. He was a friend of honest fooling, and had a wholesome liking for feats of dexterity and strength (xiii). All that he hated was the corruption of filthy lucre, 'the springes to catch woodcocks,' which were defiling the pure founts of English sport. When that promising lad, Luke Wilding, left him in 1750 for the howling wilderness of London, he put into his hand a precautionary little book, published three years before, on *The Tricks of the Town laid open, or a companion for Country Gentlemen, wherein is contained the Humorous Frauds, Tricks and Cheats of Tennis-Courts, Bowling Greens, Play-houses, Gaming-houses, Cock-matches and Horse-races.*'

The Rev. Pilkington Morgan, who succeeded Hildesley, was even more indulgent, because as a sportsman he needed indulgence on his own account. It was for his own use that he bought Jones's celebrated work on *The Art of Skittling* and sent for a practical guide to bowls, so that when Dr. Young (of the *Night Thoughts*) came over from Welwyn for his Turnpike meetings at the Sun he might associate with him afterwards on the bowling-green of that inn and put up something of a game. Still more indulgent was a later vicar, Henry Wiles, who allowed his two boys to amuse themselves on week-day mornings by trundling their hoops up and down the central aisle of the nave. But they were good boys, for when their father came to read matins in the empty church they would stand like two aureoled cherubs on either side of him until the benediction, and so again to their play.

But let us leave the clergy and glance at the indulgence which the parish as a whole claimed for itself on election days, coronation days and May Days. Here, for example, is Ralph Radcliffe's account of the election of 1734: 'Both sides of Hitchin Hill were crowded with Rabble as we drove in our coach for Hertford. They threw dirt and stones and other nastiness and broke the windows everywhere.' A special Sessions was held the next day to punish the rioters. And here is William Lucas's account of

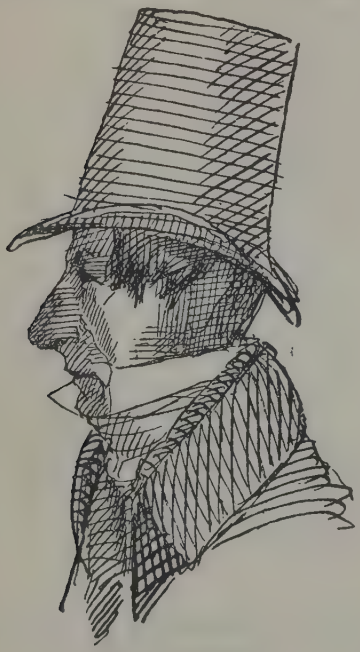
xiii. He used to tell a good story about his assistant priest, the Rev. Stephen Godly, who lies buried beneath a table-tomb on the north side of St. Mary's. Once upon a time Godly went over to preach at Pirton, 'and being a very corpulent and strong man and finding the pulpit door too narrow for him, he pulled it down with a panel of the pulpit at one effort, and preached on in the remaining part.'



A HITCHIN POLITICIAN

From a sketch by Samuel Lucas

the proclamation of King George IV in this royal manor. ' 1820. 22 February. The King was proclaimed in this town being market day by William Wilshere as Deputy Sheriff, attended by several of our townsmen on horseback. The rabble were very rude in throwing snowballs at him ' (24). Here, again, is the election of 1841. Samuel Lucas writes to his wife: ' The quiet town of Hitchin has lost its character this week. We have been



DAN HAWKINS

all bustle, and the last two days uproar, music, bell-ringing. A Tory band has been parading the streets incessantly, followed by all the rabble of Hollow Lane and Back Street. We have had to endure the exultations of the victorious party. After an ill-conducted struggle Alston has been defeated by a majority up to last night of 630. Never was a contest more unequal. Before Alston had started, committees of Landlords, Gentry and Clergy were formed in every district, and they had canvassed nearly

every voter within their influence. The lame, the paralytic, the aged were brought up from every quarter' (711).

Thirteen years later he describes an even more scandalous election: 'The Polling, which became more riotous as the day drew on, closed at 5 o'clock and the mob, irritated by the manner of Thomas Gorham Pierson and Dan Hawkins, attacked the Blues at the Sun, and then ensued a fearful scene: breaking heads and windows and great scuffling which lasted with but little interruption for an hour or more. The Town is now becoming quiet again. The Public Houses only are full of company' (711). The Hustings, it may be added, were erected in the Market Square, down by the Sun Street end. You went up three steps on to a platform, declared your vote, and came down the other side, being kissed on one cheek by the Tory agent and smitten on the other by the Whig—or *vice versa*. On the last occasion that the Hustings were used, in 1868, there was such a violent commotion in the square that the head constable was driven to his last resource; but it was one that had never failed him in his need. He accordingly offered Steppy Thrussell and Blacksmith Westwood a small purse to start a fight at the north end of the square. The populace, seeing them at it, stopped rioting, and flocked in their direction. Then by slow steps, as they had been prompted, the pugilists fought their way along Cock Street, and up Pound Lane into Butts Close, where amidst a large crowd they fought it out to a finish. An amusing variation of the Pied Piper of Hamlin's device to draw the vermin out of the town.

VII

Compared with these uproars, the May Day revels must have seemed almost respectable, for they were performed under the sobering influence of a long and honourable tradition. You may follow them in the admirable account said to have been written by Louisa Hinde of Bancroft, Hitchin, which William Hone afterwards printed with an illustration in his *Every-day Book*, 1. 565–6. 'Soon after three o'clock in the morning a large party of the town-people, and neighbouring labourers, parade the town singing the *Mayers' Song*. They carry in their hands large branches of May, and they affix a branch either upon, or at the side of, the doors of nearly every respectable house in the town:

where there are knockers they place these branches within the handles; that which was put into our knocker was so large that the servant could not open the door until the gardener came and took it out. The larger the branch is that is placed at the door the more honourable to the house, or rather to the servants of the house. If, in the course of the year, a servant has given offence to any of the Mayers, then, instead of a branch of May, a branch of elder, with a bunch of nettles, is affixed to her door; this is

THE HITCHIN MAYERS

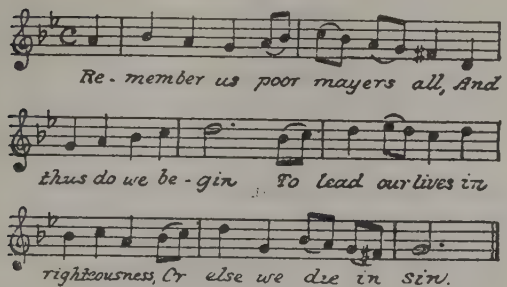
considered a great disgrace, and the unfortunate subject of it is exposed to the jeers of her rivals. On May morning, therefore, the girls look with some anxiety for their May-branch and rise very early to ascertain their good or ill fortune. The houses are all thus decorated by four o'clock in the morning. Throughout the day parties of these Mayers are seen dancing and frolicking in various parts of the town. The group that I saw to-day, which

remained in Bancroft for more than an hour, was composed as follows: First came two men with their faces blacked, one of them with a birch broom in his hand and a large artificial hump on his back; the other dressed as a woman, all in rags and tatters, with a large straw bonnet on, and carrying a ladle; these are called "mad Moll and her husband"; next came two men, one most fantastically dressed with ribbons and a large variety of gaudy-coloured silk handkerchiefs tied round his arms from the shoulders to the wrists and down his thighs and legs to the ankles; he carried a drawn sword in his hand; leaning upon his arm was a youth dressed as a fine lady, in white muslin, and profusely bedecked from top to toe with gay ribbons: these, I understood, were called the "Lord and Lady" of the company. After them followed six or seven couples more, attired much in the same style as the lord and lady, only the men were without swords. When this group received a satisfactory contribution at any house the music struck up from a violin, clarionet, and fife, accompanied by the long drum, and they began the merry dance, and very well they danced, I assure you; the men-women looked and footed it so much like real women that I stood in great doubt as to which sex they belonged to, till Mrs. J(eeves) assured me that women were not permitted to mingle in these sports. When the circle of spectators became so contracted as to interrupt the dancers, then mad Moll's husband went to work with his broom, and swept the road dust all round the circle into the faces of the crowd, and when any pretended affronts were offered to his wife, he pursued the offenders, broom in hand; if he could not overtake them, whether they were males or females, he flung his broom at them. These flights and pursuits caused an abundance of merriment.'

'I saw another company of Mayers in Sun Street, and, as far as I could judge from where I stood, it appeared to be of exactly the same description as that above mentioned, but I did not venture very near them, for I perceived mad Moll's husband exercising his broom so briskly upon the flying crowd, that I kept at a respectful distance.'

'The "Mayers' Song" is a composition of great antiquity, and I was therefore very desirous to procure a copy of it. This, I found, however, more difficult to accomplish than I had anticipated, but I at length succeeded in obtaining it from one of the Mayers. The following is a literal transcript of it:—

MAYERS' SONG.



Remember us poor Mayers all,
  And thus do we begin
To lead our lives in righteousness,
  Or else we die in sin.

We have been rambling all this night,
  And almost all this day;
And now returned back again,
  We have brought you a branch of May.

A branch of May we have brought you
  And at your door it stands;
It is but a sprout, but it's well budded out,
  By the work of our Lord's hands.

The hedges and trees they are so green,
  As green as any leek;
Our Heavenly Father He watereth them
  With His Heavenly dew so sweet.

The Heavenly gates are open wide,
  Our paths are beaten plain;
And if a man be not too far gone,
  He may return again.

The life of man is but a span,
  It flourishes like a flower,
We are here to-day, and gone to-morrow,
  And we are dead in an hour.

The moon shines bright and the stars give a light,
  A little before it is day,
So God bless you all, both great and small,
  And send you a joyful May.

In another part of the *Every-day Book* (vol. ii, 1174) Hone prints some local information supplied by John Brand, the antiquary. 'It was formerly,' he says, 'the custom at Hitchin for each farmer to drive furiously home with the last load of his corn, while the people ran after him with bowls full of water in order to throw on it, and this usage was accompanied with great shouting' (xiv). A little while, however, and that custom was lost to sight in the harvest suppers, when bowls, full of something stronger than water, were tossed not upon the corn, but down the throats of the reapers. You may see the modest beginnings of these suppers in the *Day Book of John Ransom*, 1810–1815, where the provision for each year in 'flour, plumbs, currants, bread, cheese, cold meat and potatoes' is faithfully set down (871). But by the sixties they had become respectable social functions, at any rate amongst the Quaker farmers, who never countenanced the use of beer. 'At night,' writes Mary Sewell on August 31, 1866, 'I attended Alfred Ransom's Harvest home. It was a successful evening. A comfortable tea; speeches and singing, conducted by Mr. Horsfield; buns and syllabub about 9.30; the company, about 150 with servants and guests, dispersed before 11 o'clock' (773).

VIII

Not even by Victoria's day, however, had the leaven of the Quakers leavened the whole lump. The old English buffoonery was always breaking in. In Hitchin Portman the townsmen began to deport themselves respectably even in their pleasures, but those in the 'Forreign,' as it was still called, remained outlandish and low-minded. Every August they would have their drunken scuffles with those imported 'spalpeen' harvesters at Ransom's and Hailey's and Baron's; and there was venom in the fighting because these Irish curs not only underlived but overworked the English working man. Every Sunday they assembled for their own saturnalia in cart-sheds or coppices beyond the Constable's

xiv. Mrs. Sale of Hinxworth Place told me in 1912 that this custom was still being observed in her parish. It was at one time universal. Upon every farm there resided a corn spirit, which at harvest time was driven from field to field until it was cut down with the final swathe of the scythe. The labourer attired in the last sheaf, or carting it to the stack, was regarded for the time being as the embodiment of the spirit of fertility, and, in order to ensure a good crop for the following year, it was essential that he should be watered. See Frazer's *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, i. 133–147.

THE THREE TUNS, TILEHOUSE STREET

From a photograph by T. W. Latchmore, 1900

beat; and sometimes these sons of Belial swarmed into the town itself to break the Sabbath peace of those assembled in God's name. Once, through the open window of the Tilehouse Street Chapel and into the midst of the congregation, there came hurtling a sheep's head. 'There's turnips to follow,' prophesied an unknown and ungodly voice. As the brethren rushed out, 'buzzing,' so the perpetrator afterwards described, 'like a hive of angry bees,' he cleared off to the bottom of the hill and hid himself in a corn-bin at the Three Tuns till the hunt went by. 'Otherwise,' he added, 'I should have been "dipped" for a Baptist in the Priory Horse-pond.'

They had their haunts within the township also. Hardly a week passed but the Red Hart, or the Artichoke, or the Highlander would have its 'tuppenny gaff,' with *Maria Martin or the Murder in the Red Barn* as a never-failing draw. In 1805, when they were playing *The Way to Get Married*, the stage at the Swan collapsed and a Mrs. Jeeves was killed (24). For those whose taste went higher there was Lacy's company of comedians at the Sun, 1790–1825, and occasionally a sight of Harriet Mellon (xv). And sportsmen could always find a pigeon-shooting match with its sweepstake in progress at the Swan (xvi). But there was really no need to pay good money at a tavern. The streets were full of strolling players. Everyone in that age of eccentrics was a likely comedian or clown. There was amusement everywhere. For the most part it took the form of practical joking. Virtuous citizens, going home to their wives, would be kidnapped in the dark and deposited in the pound. Shopkeepers, opening their shutters of a morning, would be amazed to see that their swing-sign had been exchanged for another. And no one seemed to

xv. 'In the service of Friend Hagger of Dicker Mill, Hertford,' writes a correspondent to the *Herts Mercury* of December 20, 1902, 'was a maid named Harriet Mellon. It was arranged for her to enter the household of another Quaker miller, John Ransom of Hitchin; and one Saturday she mounted pillion behind her new master and travelled thus to his house in Bancroft. This John Ransom was a portly man, with large wig and dark-brown top-boots. He was usually seen on horseback, and was in that position said to much resemble "the old king." After a time Harriet joined a troupe of stage-players visiting Hitchin, and ere long became a noted actress, and finally the wife of the great banker Thomas Coutts.' These particulars of the actress's life are difficult to reconcile with some printed accounts of her career; but the writer was evidently well informed.

xvi. These were frequented by the gentry, too, and Frederick Peter Delmé Radcliffe, who, after a four days' contest, had won the All-England stakes, was often to be seen shooting at the Swan.

mind. The young Latchmores used to take their pleasure in pea-shooting through the open window of David Paddon's school, aiming to hit the round target of baldness on the back of the pedagogue's head. But Paddon went on teaching. It certainly would not have helped him to complain to George Lewin, the constable, for Lewin did much the same. It used to be told of that jocular, easygoing man that he would sit of a Tuesday by his bakehouse window in Cock Street, open it just a little, and let fly with his pea-shooter at the farmers passing by. Another whim of his pre-constable days was to try his catapult at Hengest and Horsa, as he called them, on the roof of the Brotherhood

A STROLLING PLAYER

House. They took some hitting, especially at night, for then they were supposed to ride along the ridge tiles, backwards and forwards, as hard as they could go (xvii).

Meantime, in the fields round Hitchin Frederick Peter Delmé-Radcliffe was riding as hard as *he* could go. That is saying a good deal, for he was one of the best men across country that England has produced; and so much more than that, for, as Bulwer Lytton said, he was 'a country gentleman able to hold his own in every

xvii. Elizabeth Moore, a sober, God-fearing woman, used to speak of seeing them ride in this fashion, as though it were the most natural thing in the world.

field of sport and no less qualified to take his seat in the cabinet of the statesman or the closet of the scholar' (Ralph Nevill, *English Country House Life*, pp. 167–8). Fired with his example, the Hitchin people abandoned some of their eccentricities and took to manlier forms of recreation. There had, of course, been hunting here long before Radcliffe's day. We still boast the

THE BROTHERHOOD HOUSE RIDGE TILE

horns of a stag that was killed in St. Mary's churchyard in 1753. But not until Radcliffe formed his harriers in 1832, and became Master of the Hertfordshire Foxhounds in 1834, could anyone gain a familiar acquaintance with the Noble Science. 'I have been engaged at the office till 4 o'clock and am proportionately

stupid,' writes William Wilshere, our solicitor M.P., in October 1833. But Radcliffe was soon there to rout him out. 'I begin fox-hunting next week,' he writes a fortnight later, 'and have been out several times with Radcliffe. He has solicited me and Prime (xviii) into having a coat. I am sure my horses will all shy at it.' He was out again on the famous Wendover run,

CHARLES PRIME

March 17, 1837: 'a day of unexampled severity,' when Radcliffe led 'the most extraordinary run upon record in the annals of Herts.' Twenty-six miles done, 'racing pace some of it,' in two hours and twenty-five minutes. The hounds 'carried a

xviii. Charles Prime, a great friend of Frederick Peter Delmé-Radcliffe. He lived at the Hermitage. On Sunday mornings after service the two of them used to stay behind in the chancel and fix the meets for the ensuing week

FREDERICK PETER DELMÉ-RADCLIFFE AND HIS HARRIERS, 1833

From a painting by the Rev. Charles Delmé-Radcliffe

beautiful head throughout the day,' and only one was missing, but of the field all but six were ' beaten out of sight,' and three horses were killed.

The tingling autumn air, the health and eagerness of men and horses and dogs, the ringing woods, the speed, the confusion, the torrent of the hunt as it ' smokes along the vale,' the sleek fox with his shining brush, flying through thick and thin—you can see it all and hear and scent it still in those hunting diaries which Radcliffe kept for over fifty years (875).

It was Radcliffe again who put life into the game of cricket, which Hitchin men had been playing after a desultory fashion on Butts Close ever since archery had ceased to be. Before his day one had heard of single-wicket matches, arranged for a goodly wager, and matches between the different crafts and guilds, e.g. Carpenters *v.* Plumbers, Tanners *v.* Cordwainers, and even Constables *v.* Citizens of Hitchin town (xix). Men still spoke with awe of John Hall, who with beaver hat on head had kept up his wicket against Ware for two solid summer days; of Long Amos and Joe Gatward, who could smite sixes into the standing corn beside the Bedford Road; of Isaac Spencer, who had introduced to these parts the high mystery of the round-arm delivery; of John Lines, who could stand in a bushel and throw the ball over a hundred yards. Radcliffe gathered this scattered talent into a side, gave it his racing colours, and in 1866 provided a spacious ground, close to his mansion on Hitchin Hill, where, in spite of its aristocratic seclusion and the loss of its Cricketers' Inn, the Club flourished until 1925, producing no first-class players (xx), but sportsmen famous in their day and generation like Captain Lautour, Cecil Reid, the Earl of Strathmore, George Hughes [i.e. Tom Brown], F. A. Wright, Charles Loftus Barham, Thomas Harwood Darton, H. G. S. Hughes, Jack Hughes, W. O. Vizard, William Wilson (pro.), Fred Coxall, W. H. English, F. R. Shillitoe (Secretary and Treasurer for thirty years), Sid. Brown (pro.), E. L. Wright, Harry Williams and R. C. Grellet.

xix. In one celebrated match the townsmen notched 362 runs and the constabulary 10.

xx. A good many minor county matches have been played here. In the Herts *v.* Essex match of June 27, 1877, V. A. Titchmarsh obtained 15 wickets, including all ten in the first innings. In the match against Sussex two years later he secured the 10 wickets for 45 runs. In the match against Sussex in 1880 Charles Pigg took all ten Northamptonshire wickets for 13.

Football, too, was beginning to turn respectable and settle down. Rescued from the streets in the early Georgian days, it was adopted by the Free School boys and played with rules, lines and goals in Paynes Park. In 1819 there was an attempt to deprive the scholars of their ground, whereupon a meeting was called and Charles Baron, who had been a trustee of the school for seventy years (surely a record service), and Daniel Chapman, who had been trustee for sixty, and Timothy Bristow, who had been trustee for fifty-two years, all declared that the game had been played on that field for as long as they remembered. Nevertheless, they did not retain their ground, nor their monopoly of the game. In 1865 the Hitchin Football Club was formed under the captaincy of Francis Shillitoe (xxi). In 1875 the Hitchin Cycling Club was founded by the Hon. Ion Keith Falconer and Arthur Latchmore. A Tennis Club was founded by William Lucas in 1880, a Hockey Club by William Lucas in 1890 (xxii), and a Golf Club by the same all-round sportsman in 1898 (xxiii).

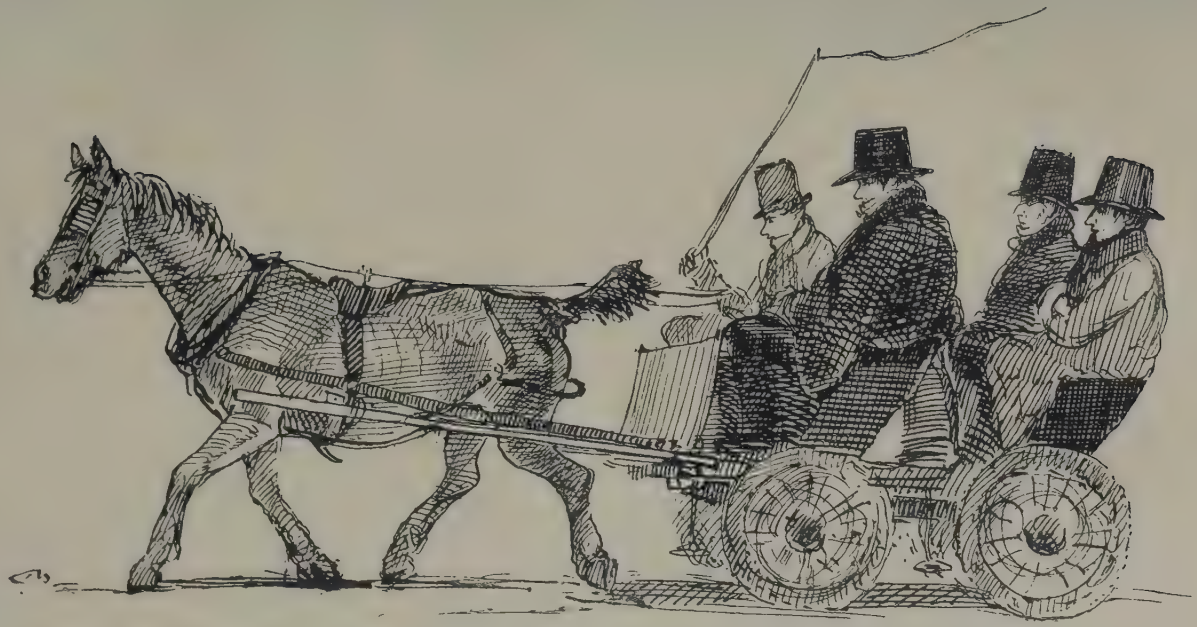
IX

This passion for sport seems to have affected all classes of society. Even amongst the Protestant Dissenters you can in the nineteenth century observe a certain relenting. There was still hardly a game their scruples would let them play, but stealthily and circumspectly they were beginning to enjoy themselves. When Joseph J. Lister visited William Lucas in 1818

xxi. They used to play at Dog Kennel Farm, Charlton; the Old Etonians, Old Harrovians and Wanderers being annual opponents. In 1872, along with fourteen other Clubs, they instituted the English Football Association Cup Competition, beating Crystal Palace and losing to the R.E. in the semi-final.

xxii. But hockey of a sort was played on the field opposite Wratten much earlier by members and friends of the Lucas family. I have heard it said that William Lucas, always very particular about the proprieties of any game he played, used to hold his hockey stick in one hand and a copy of the rules, ready for instant quotation, in the other.

xxiii. This Club, precariously established on Butts Close, could not hope to flourish, and it did not. What with roads and railings, courting couples and cows, nursemaids and perambulators, the hazards proved too many. The worst scolding I ever had was from a woman in the Bedford Road, whose bedroom window I had smashed with a slightly erratic drive. I asked for my ball and offered compensation; but she loudly refused to compound such a felony, and used language which even I, though a hardened golfer, had not heard before.



SAMUEL LUCAS, WILLIAM LUCAS, AND RICHARD LOW BECK OFF TO THE LAKES IN WILLIAM NORRIS'S ONE-HORSE CHAISE

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas, 1834

he was exhorted to bring 'Thor's Hammer' with him, so that the two geologists might go exploring the Hitchin pits and quarries together. On another occasion Lucas took his guest to Newmarket to see that celebrated racehorse Leviathan, which Emilius Delmé-Radcliffe had purchased for His Majesty. 'It is supposed,' said *The Times* of January 12, 1828, 'to be the largest and most superb-looking blood horse ever produced in this or any other country.' On another occasion, in 1837, Lucas hurried out of the town to see 'Green the Aeronaut, having ascended in his great balloon from Vauxhall Gardens, land safely over the heads of a wondering crowd near Offley Holes.'

Some went farther afield in pursuit of pleasure. In 1812 two Hitchin Quakers, Joshua Ransom and Richard Day, 'performed' a *Pedestrian Tour through some of the more Romantic Parts of Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and Scotland.* Their account of it, 'inscribed with pleasing and grateful retrospect to Helvellyn, Skiddaw and the Sister Lakes,' is written in a style of splendid diction. They speak of 'sacred gloom and silence of sequestered vale, and scenes so sad they half entomb the soul.' But this may be explained by their having sojourned with the poet Southey 'by the lake side at Buttermere.' Twenty-two years later they were followed by William Lucas the younger and his brother Samuel. But their diction is not splendid. 'Quakers sometimes swear,' breaks out William in his *Journal*, 'and I am sure I could have done so once or twice today. Here we are, rain, rain, rain; no books and wanting to get to Lodore by bedtime but afraid to start, in a regular fit of the blues. This dirty inn and the semi-barbarous, half-licked villagers, the pigs, dogs and everything by this time thoroughly known to us and divested of all interest. No trout to be caught and no sketches to be taken; in a room not big enough to whip a cat in, with a dismally ludicrous picture of the Siege of Seringapatam hanging over the fireplace; heartily sick of Rosthwaite, the very beauties of which the wet has washed out. Often we talk longingly of Hitchin, and vow to quit the lakes as soon as possible.' Clearly their luck was out, for they were disappointed also in their hope of seeing Wordsworth. They paced up and down in front of his house, but the poet failed to appear. They gossiped, however, with the natives. 'Wordsworth seems well known to all the Grassmere and Ambleside peasants. They say he is a good old gentleman who often stops to talk to them but makes most dismal

noises occasionally, sighing, groaning, " scawping " (xxiv) and humming as he walks along. His failing sight obliges him to wear a shade over his eyes.'

' We talked longingly of Hitchin.' Yes, these ' pedestrious tours ' were all very well, but there was no place like home. He was a dull creature who could not be happy there. Think of the hundred and one additional ways there were of being amused—and most of them quite innocent. The Natural History Club. ' My chief delight,' said William Dawson, ' is gathering moss in a gentle rain.' The Essay Society, where the choicer spirits displayed their genteel accomplishments in prose and verse. The Spelling Bees, where sometimes even Senior Wrangler

MISS DUDLEY RYDER ROWING THE REV. J. F. AND MISS STUART ON OUGHTON HEAD

Hensley would go down to the bottom. The Acrostic Club, which that ingenious spirit, Lawson Thompson, ran (879). Bowling on the Sun bowling-green, where under the rules of the Club, re-formed in 1860, no wagers could be staked, but rewards in the nature of meerschaum pipes or coloured waistcoats were allotted to those who won the most games in the year. Boating on Oughton Head, and, peradventure, further, for had not two intrepid watermen, Francis Shillitoe and William Hill, in their *Ruby* and *Wanderer* canoes worked their way by river from

xxiv. A word not to be found in the *Dialect Dictionary*. I think it signifies ' beating the air ' with the hands as if in time to the measure of the verse. It is a trick that many poets have in the crisis of composition. Whenever the divine afflatus descended upon Wordsworth the neighbourhood soon knew of it. ' Auld Willum Wordsworth has broke loose again,' the rustics used to say.

Hitchin down to Yarmouth? (880). And Croquet, that most Victorian of games. 'Yesterday,' writes Samuel Lucas on the 4th of April, 1862, 'the vernal weather brought our young folks into the garden at their game of Crockey, and I was tempted to join them for a few games. . . . This newly invented game suits persons of every age. The exercise is gentle, and as some little deliberation and Skill are necessary young folks do not always win.'

To some non-conforming Nonconformists these amusements seemed too mild. They wanted something with more kick and devil in it; something upon, if not over, the border-line of permitted recreation. The leading Independent hazarded his soul in Opera Houses and in London theatres: '1838. January 19. Saw Kean in Hamlet. On the whole a good performance. Too much ranting occasionally, but when subdued very good.' He wasted his substance in whist: '1838. August 28. Dined at Priory. Played infamously at whist and lost 8s. 6d.' And he attended race-meetings: '1838. July 11. At the races. Pocket picked to the extent of £10.' So did many of those young sparks who were rising up, after being so long damped down, in the stricter Quaker households. 'My uncle prayed after breakfast,' notes Mary Sewell in her diary under the 16 May, 1866, 'particularly for his children, this being Derby Day.' Two days later she enters with evident relief: 'Ralph and Edwin returned safely from the Derby' (773). John Gatward, the leading Baptist, was not quite so daring, but he developed an unholy passion for angling. For a time he kept his guilty secret to himself and, lest he should lead the weaker brethren astray, he visited his favourite streams like Nicodemus at night. If he wanted a whole day's angling he would 'drive out on business,' with a barometer stuck out prominently in the gig to be returned duly rectified to a country customer. But the barometer was usually seen to come back at night along with Gatward's fishing-rod and catch.

X

One by one the last flickers of eccentricity die, and in this world of organized sport we shall not look upon their like again. There is Sam Marsom, and the Brothers Ansell puffing and blowing after their greyhounds along the Bedford Road. The poor hare,

at its wits' end, flies for refuge through Nancy Albon's open door. She, like a good housewife, deftly snares him in her apron, and with her tongue, sharper than a two-edged sword, keeps the whole pack of them at bay.

Now look upon that noisy mob of people on the other side of the parish, surging after Arthur Lewin of Charlton Mill, who with a half-sack of flour on his back is running for a wager against Edwin Tooley, who staggers on with his eldest son upon his back. Now lift up your eyes to Highbury, on whose happy fields, so soon to be covered with bricks and mortar, Charles Kingsley and Arthur Lines are engaged in a scything match. Each is provided with a 'second' to sharpen his spare scythe. There is no end of a dispute about it, for Lines manages to finish first only by scamping his work, whereas Kingsley all through maintains a close and honest swathe.

Down in Cock Street you may observe another warm dispute. It seems that Herbert Crawley, a butcher of enormous girth, has thrown out this challenge to another tradesman who is a noted sprinter: 'Give me five yards start in twenty-five, and let me choose my own course, and I'll run you for a guinea.' 'Done with you,' says the sprinter, for he knows he can give Crawley half the distance any day and beat him hollow. Whereupon Crawley, with a knowing air, waddles into Cock Street, places himself five yards up the narrow passage known as Quakers Alley and shouts over his shoulder, 'Now we start.' Under such conditions the issue is never in doubt. The sprinter has no possible chance to sprint, for the shoulders and sirloin of the butcher fill up the alley. It is, as the spectators say, a 'walk-over.'

Disputes there will be even in walking-matches. Look for a moment at the athletic sports held every year upon the cricket field. What a gathering of great men! S. F. Edge, afterwards the racing motorist, is there; Holbein, afterwards the Channel swimmer; and F. W. Shorland, all on their high cycles, with Dan Albon riding the new low-type, equal-wheeled machine which he is introducing to these parts. But look rather at that professional pedestrian who, having been disqualified, is making a scene upon the track. From words it comes to blows. He walks up to the referee and strikes him in the face, after which he leaves the field, not by any means at a walking pace, with judges, Committee men, policemen, fellow competitors and reporters in hot and furious chase.

These goings-on, which to us appear unseemly and eccentric, were not eccentric then. They might happen, and they did happen, any day. What our grandfathers thought to be really eccentric was the goings-on at the college (on its migration to Cambridge, later known as Girton College), which in 1869 had its humble beginning at Benslow in this parish. From time immemorial the women of this old-fashioned town had been taught to keep their place. It was sufficient that they should

HITCHIN SPINSTER AT HER SPINET

' learn all partes and sortes of good housewifrie and spinstering.' If any finishing was thought needful for young gentlewomen, well, there could be no harm in teaching them to recite the poems of Mrs. Hemans, or to work samplers and fine embroidery; if more was needed, they could tinkle the melodies of Balfe on the piano, press flowers in albums, and dabble in water-colours. Strange that this benighted parish should have been singled out by those educational pioneers who had resolved to enfranchise the women of the future from all this ' spinstery.' Seebohm and Tuke and

Ransom understood. And so did the novelist George Eliot: ' I am cheered,' she writes, ' by hearing that the beginning at Hitchin looks so happy and promising. I care so much about individual happiness that I think it is a great thing to work for only to make half a dozen lives rather better than they otherwise might be ' (993. 227). But most Hitchin people were horrified at this futile expenditure upon the female mind. They heard that Seeley of *Ecce Homo* fame was brought to the college to lecture on *Lycidas*, and Dr. Hort on *Acts*, and James Bryce on *Greek History*; whilst Senior Wrangler Moulton (afterwards Lord Moulton) ' poured forth an amazing illumination on elementary mathematics.' How much better it would be, they said in the town, if all this money were given to the poor!

But astonishment gave place to scandal when it was whispered that these blue-stockings were pioneers in sport and pastimes, too. In the most revolutionary way they were presuming to ' play fives and cricket in the garden,' and were clamouring to their principal, Emily Davies, to be allowed to play football, too (993. 225). As if that were not bad enough, they went on ' to play Shakespeare in male attire,' though George Eliot, being consulted by the distracted principal, ' expressed her disapproval ' (993. 241–3). Altogether it was a blessed relief when this colony of wanton and eccentric women removed to a higher sphere, and allowed this parish to sink back into its respectable and sober ways.

XI

Not quite sober or respectable, however. Even in the sixties there were a few left to remind us of the old traditions. One thinks of Craft, the town-crier, always hoarse and thirsty, always ready for a beer-drinking contest at any tavern in the town. One thinks of that spirited Quakeress who challenged the vicar's daughter to a duel of ' eating doughnuts,' and confessed afterwards to Dr. Oswald Foster that she had bolted fourteen and yet had been a loser. One thinks of that other eminent Quaker who confessed to me in his ninetieth year, when he was on his death-bed, that he had exhibited himself on an elephant and had ridden round and round the market-place with a top-hat on his head.

One sighs to think how many whimsical and pleasant things have passed for ever out of our parish life. Where are the

'treacle-suckers' of old Susan Honeybone so irresistibly displayed? Where is Phoebe Dawborne, 'the pretty Muffin girl,' with her basket and her bell? Where is Joe Tansley, who was once to be seen sitting in his yellow cart, blowing like Triton his wreathed horn, and chanting the eulogy of deceased mackerel? Where is Tommy Chamberlain, with his stall of cakes and

CRAFT, THE TOWN-CRIER

sweets? Where is the Flint bun, and where is the Logsdon cheesecake (xxv)? Where is Whitehead, tailor by day and postman by night, who would stand by the Sailor Boy at Walsworth and blow his horn as a signal to those who had letters for the

xxv. I used as a boy to bicycle eight miles into Hitchin for the joy of feasting on these cheesecakes. They were beyond praise, and almost beyond description. It was an amazement to me how the pastry, light and flaky as falling snow, could ever hold together. As for the curd within, a generous inch and a half in depth, it was delicious. To eat it as an epicure should, solemnly and with due reverence, was like going slowly through Paradise.

post to bring them up to him (xxvi)? Where are Lance Wright and Noel Wright, sons of Anak both, who would run down the wicket to meet the fastest ball and send it towering over the cricket-field trees? Where is T. B. Latchmore, who once held the Ackworth school skipping-rope for John Bright to skip? Where is Thomas Langdale Paternoster, manager of Pierson and Crabb's Bank, who used for the entertainment of the parish ' to get out sometimes on the roof of the Bank wearing a Mask on his face and performing strange anticks ' (966)? Where is John Newton, the schoolmaster, who, when lecturing one day in the Assembly Rooms at the Sun on *The Movement of the Heavenly Bodies*, illustrated his theme so vigorously that he lost his balance and came with his apparatus to the ground? Where is Inspector Young, whose stentorian ' Right away to London! ' could almost be heard at King's Cross? Where is George Jackson, who used to bandy words so glibly with his bidders and hand his snuff-box with such an eighteenth-century air to the chief buyers in the cattle market? Where . . .? But, alas! you can hear the answer in the auctioneer's own words: ' Going—going—gone.'

It is a quiet backwater of life which the historian must inhabit if he is to listen intently to the voices of the past. The alarums and excursions of the noisy world must not intrude. And yet, even to a recluse, how alluring, how full of strange meaning, are the pleasures of the present. In an age bent on attaining the greatest idleness of the greatest number, what a diversity of new pleasures are invented to amuse that idleness! No single chapter could contain them now. And do you mark how in these new pleasures it is speed that is held to be the one thing needful? The natural expression, you will say, of man's glory in his own inventive powers. But it goes deeper than that. Unless one mistakes, it is a sign of his own delirium and disquietude of soul. A century ago, when men were more assured about a future existence and pleasures still to come, they could dance to slow measures and take life easily. The crumbling of that assurance is making itself felt. *La vie n'est qu'un amusement en attendant la mort.* A bitter saying that has rung like a knell into the doubting hearts of men, and caused them to consider

xxvi. In his later years, when the 100,000 miles which he said he had walked on his Walsworth, Willian and Letchworth round had shortened his wind, he blew a whistle instead. When he could no longer whistle the G.P.O. installed a pillar-box.

their latter end, and turn again, with an ever-increasing abandonment, to wring the last ounce of happiness out of this mortal life.

And now men dance, not like King David of old to the glory of God, but to keep the Devil and all dark thoughts at bay. Let the music play, louder and louder. Take hands and swing out into the full tide of the dance, till the senses reel and every care is drowned. . . .

Dead-tired and disillusioned, they come out of their stifling halls, and it is day. How exquisite is the dew on 'the opening eyelids of the morn.' The birds sing divinely in the Bancroft gardens. The sun rises superbly over Windmill Hill. Perhaps that boisterous optimist of a poet was right after all. At any rate, on such a morning, be God in His heaven or be He not, 'all's right with the world.'

JOSEPH SHARPLES SKATING

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT (i)

' The World, my Dear, hath not such a contempt for Roguery as you imagine.'—Peachum, in *The Beggar's Opera*, Act I, Scene I.

I

N the Introduction to this work a contrast was drawn between the sober and godly life of this Quaker town, ' in whose streets respectability stalks on unchecked,' and the dissolute, ungodly life of that unregenerate, pre-Quaker Hitchin whose memory has sunk into oblivion and perdition. The author, as if weary of an age ' without one redeeming vice,' spoke of the temptation of making the earlier record more lurid than it was. He was maliciously inclined to show what a worldly life this unworldly community had led, what centuries this peaceful town had spent in breaking the peace. The time has now come to make that contrast good.

To us sedentary writers, and to the still more sedentary readers, with our bleached and bloodless minds, there is always something attractive about the white-hot passions of men as expressed in a calendar of crime. We may have neither the daring nor the devilry of our fathers, but at a safe distance we like to follow their exploits, and we feel a family pride in their ' enormious and exhorbitant offences.' As if ashamed of our clean, incompetent hands, we like to think that in our ' flaming and canicular days ' we, too, might have committed, not those little sins and shabby peccadilloes to which our age is addicted, but something more akin to their *splendida peccata*, their stark and staring crimes. They have about them that air of ' pleasant atrocity ' which FitzGerald admired in the pages of Tacitus, and, being long passed away, they can be remembered without dishonour.

There is another pleasure, and a more honest one perhaps.

i. I have to thank Professor W. S. Holdsworth, K.C., D.C.L., author of *A History of English Law* in 9 vols., 1903–1926, for reading this chapter in manuscript and for making many valuable suggestions for its improvement. Also Sir Charles Longmore, K.C.B., Clerk of the Peace, for subjecting this chapter to a second revision.

MEDIEVAL TRIPTYCH: THE CAPTURE, THE EXAMINATION, THE EXECUTION CART

For sources see List of Illustrations

It is that which a student of history experiences as he handles the indictments and the depositions of these evil-doers. As if for the first time, he seems to touch the burning issues of life. 'Our history,' complains G. K. Chesterton, 'is stiff with official documents, public or private, which tell us nothing of the thing itself.' 'Most of the doings and misdoings of the nations,' laments H. G. Wells, 'lie flat and colourless now in the histories like dead flowers in an old book.' But in personal crime there is often a preserving salt of humour and plain, vernacular speech. From these Ancient Indictments, these Assize and Quarter Session Rolls, there rises a clamour of voices that is clearly distinguishable across the centuries. The men and the women have at one another in such a fashion that the intervening years are thin as a paper wall. Every word rings out sharp and clear. Of a sudden one is made free of the real old world which had seemed so impenetrable, whilst behind the record there spreads the English country-side with its cottages and castles and wooded lanes, arched by the same sky that covers us.

It has been said that crime is a bad glass through which to view civilization, and in a sense that is true. To take the Crown division of an Eyre Roll or a Roll of Coroner's Inquests, and attempt to extract from it a view of medieval society as a whole, would certainly be dangerous. Criminal records, in the nature of things, deal with one aspect of life only, and that an unpleasant one. Yet the dangers arising from their use may be exaggerated. We must not assume when we read of deeds of violence that there were no peaceful and honest persons in the towns and villages of England; but it is quite certain that no view of medieval life can hope to be complete which does not pay considerable attention to the deeds of malefactors (908). It is needful to know the hurly-burly as well as the humdrum of history, the scoundrels as well as the saints; for, as another writer has reminded us, 'sin, in some shape or other, is the great staple of history and the sole subject of law, and we must expect both from the historian and the legislator to hear of its outcome in human affairs' (S. R. Maitland, *The Dark Ages*, p. 58).

II

In this parish of Hitchin the outcome has been considerable. It is true that, as tenants of the Ancient Demesne of the Crown,

we were, in early days, not bound to attend the Hundred moot or the county court. We were not assessed with the rest for Danegeld or common amercements or the murder fine. We were exempted from the jurisdiction of the sheriff and did not serve on juries and assizes before the King's justices. But it is clear from the records that we kept our own courts busy, and, however privileged as a class we were, we seem to have behaved just as badly as ordinary peccable mortals.

The general impression produced by these records is one of a highly picturesque insecurity of life, under the meshes of a very intricate system of law and order. It is a life more high-pitched and violent than our own. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the ordinary affairs of everyday existence are liable to be transformed into unnecessary and sordid tragedies. A good citizen of Hitchin 'coming in God's peace from St. Andrew's church towards the Angell inn,' 'a girl keeping watch over some sheep on Highover Hill,' an archer 'shooting against another for a wager in Butts Close,' a woman 'drawing water from Caps Well'—all meet with sudden death, dishonour or disaster. It is a mad world, my masters. There are too many runagates, 'cooling their hearts,' after the medieval phrase, with an occasional murder or two; there are too many 'idle, young, green-headed and ill-nurtured persons' breaking one another's heads in too-frequent riots; there are too many women at war with women of their street or ward, viragoes passing in a moment, *a verbis ad verbera*, from words to blows. One knows all the time that honest things like wool and corn and oil are being bought and sold in Hitchin market; that the steward is busy collecting his dues; that the priest of St. Andrew's is kneeling at his altar. But the quiet habit of life, the social order and decorum are obscured by wicked men and women 'cursing one another to eternity,' acting 'full Judasly' to the humble and meek, flourishing like green bay-trees in their short career, and dying at last like dogs, 'without shrift or howsell or contricion' (ii).

After studying the records of this period, one is left with the unpleasant conviction that a large proportion of these

ii. Professor Holdsworth observes: 'For the sake of students you should add a reference to the Bills in Eyre, which reinforce your conclusions as to the characteristics of life in the thirteenth century.' See *Select Bills in Eyre* (Selden Society) and Holdsworth's *A History of English Law*, ii, 336–9.

criminals escaped unpunished. If, for example, you study the Hertfordshire Gaol Delivery Rolls for 1324 you will find that of the 285 prisoners only 43 were brought in guilty, and that of the Hitchin prisoners every one was acquitted. Is it a mere coincidence? William Parys, John Ster and John le Pek are charged with having burgled the house of Edmund Poltat, and with having stolen linen and woollen cloths to the value of 10s.; John Faber [smith] is indicted for having feloniously killed Thomas de Castre in the hamlet of Langley; William Welde and John Campe for plundering Richard Hunte of his brass vessels and other goods; Peter le Couper for having stolen two sheep of Peter le Reeve; William Campe for having received seven bushels of malt of the value of 4s., knowing them to have been stolen; Geoffrey le Gaillour [gaoler] for furtively carrying away certain brass vessels of Peter le Reeve at Walsworth (iii); John Durlad for having stolen a horse. One after another each and every felon comes forward and 'says that in nothing is he guilty.' One after another each juryman says the same. 'Therefore he may go hence quit' (891. 22, m. 9, 11 and 11d).

The meshes of medieval law seem intricate enough; but evidently to those who knew the ropes it was quite simple to break through. By cunning, connivance or by force of arms the law could easily be made an ass; and many criminals who should have swung lived on to commit crimes another day. In criminal as in civil proceedings too often the case 'ended as it was friended.' 'Handy-dandy' was the proverbial expression for a covert bribe, and the perversion of justice is reflected in the Latin jingle: '*Jus sine jure datur si nummus in aure loquatur.*'

Perhaps one could not expect much from the sort of officers who then dispensed the law. In 1287, for example, the township of Hitchin chose for its bailiff one Vincent, who for lack of evidence had been acquitted of murdering Robert the Englishman (890. 328. m. 24). At the next Assizes some exception was taken to so scandalous an appointment; but it does not seem to have been cancelled. In 1287 Vincent's successor was arraigned for having taken four shillings to let a felon out of his custody,

iii. Peter was evidently a most unpopular reeve. In the following year, 1325, his house was broken into again by John the Miller and John Geraud, who carried away a brass pot, a bushel of corn, a quantity of oaten flour [*farinam aven*], and a gammon of bacon (891. 22. m. 8). Altogether the records show seven 'plunderings' of his house at Hitchin.

and was put in custody in his stead. In 1278 Richard, the lying clerk of Walter of Essex, told Nicholas the Red of Hitchin that there was an indictment out against him for murdering Walter Lyning, but that his master, by virtue of his office, could save Nicholas's skin if it were made worth his while. Whereupon the terrified Nicholas made over the then great sum of 40s., 'that he might aid him at Newgate,' only to find later on that he had been grossly deceived (890. 320. m. 50).

III

If the minions of the law proved incorruptible one resorted to intimidation. It was not a fine art like bribery, but it served its turn; for it was one thing to set the law in motion and quite another thing to keep it moving; the least obstruction would bring it to a stop. With 'outlandish' or foreign people especially, intimidation was thought fair play. Why should they have the protection and the privilege of English law? In the thirty-fourth year of Henry II, 1187, Isaac Judaeus de Hich invoked the law against a Christian who had done him wrong. One waits for him to follow up his plea. But something happened. Year after year the sheriff renders an account of one mark against the Jew, '*quia non est prosecutus*'; year after year he has to report on a deficit to the King's treasury: *sed non invenitur*. In the fourth year of Richard I he is still 'not to be found' (Pipe Roll Soc., vol. 38, p. 37; vol. 40. pp. 26 and 169). So it fared as late as the fifteenth year of Edward IV with a Scotsman who endeavoured to assert his rights. His life was made so wretched for him by the good people of Hitchin that he had to go to London at great expense and procure a 'mandate to the town bailiff to permit John Wynshelys, a Scotchman dwelling in Hitchin, to inhabit the realm peacefully and enjoy his goods' (889. 15 Edw. IV, Pt. 1, m. 11d).

But even with Englishmen, and even with the King's Justices, intimidation was widely practised. In the year 1350, for example, John Legat of Hitchin, 'lately appointed to keep the peace in the county of Hertford,' was driven to take proceedings against certain who had 'disseised him of his free tenement.' Thereupon 'these same persons with others, not having respect to his being a keeper of the King's peace and so his lieutenant, seditiously killed him at Hitchin as he was on his way to Hertford

to prosecute his Assize before his fellow Justices, and they go about in that county and elsewhere to kill or injure the Justices and the King's lieges put by the sheriff on the panel of that Assize to know the truth therein, and others who had indicted them of the felony, extorting many sums of money from the indictors, and doing daily many other damages, felonies and crimes ' (889. 24 Edw. III, Pt. 2, m. 16d) (iv). That is a grim view of English social life in the year of anarchy that followed the Black Death, but even in normal times there is evidence in plenty of the ' scorn and affront of those in authority,' and presentments of such desperadoes ' as prize all their puissance and lordship at one clove of garlic.'

If the bailiff could not be bribed and the Justice could not be waylaid and slain, the evil-doer had to adopt other means of defence. And fortunately the choice was wide. If he had any sort of influence in the parish, he could cover up the traces of his crime, and get the victim's body ' buried without view of coroner.' Over and over again the town of Hitchin is ' in mercy ' on this account: ' 1278. Unknown malefactors killed Roger of Bayford and William his son in " forinseca " [foreign part] of the vill of Hiche and fled at once, and it is not known who was the first finder, and three neighbours came and are not malefactors. And Hugh de Bayford, one of the neighbours, did not come, and was attached by William Norman and Hugh de Cruce, therefore in mercy. And Roger and William de Bayford were buried without view of coroner by Geoffry de Bayford, and by the four neighbouring vills, Pyrton, Offele, Dinesle and Hiche. Therefore in mercy. And it is testified that Geoffry died and because Hugh is poor he is pardoned ' (890. 323. m. 47d).

If, for some reason or other, the body could not be put away, if its blood cried aloud to heaven for vengeance, the murderer took to his heels and made for sanctuary (v). So long as he

iv. This is no solitary case. One could cite instances all over England, especially in country districts, to show a similar collapse of the administration of justice. In 1463 the Cambridge Sessions were broken up by a band of roughs who threatened to smite off the heads of those empanelled to try them. At a village in Kent the vicar announced with a loud voice from the pulpit that if any sheriff or any other officer of the King came to the town he would ring the great bell, and at the sound of it the people were to assault and slay the officer (906).

v. For a full exposition of the law of Sanctuary and Abjuration see Andre Reville's paper on ' Abjuratio Regni,' *Revue Historique*, vol. 50, 1–42, 1892, and Holdsworth's *A History of English Law*, iii. 303–7.

clung to the altar of his mother church he was tolerably safe, though there were those who in hot blood would even profane the House of God. In 1324 William de Hicche had to answer as surety for Richard Andrew, who had pursued one John Gloppard into a place of sanctuary ' and struck him in the belly just under the navel, with a knife called Thwytel (vi), making a wound five inches deep of which he immediately died ' (Cal. of Coroners Rolls of the City of London, R. R. Sharpe, p. 105). Again, in 1425, Ralph Clifton of Hichyn, being suspected of homicide, was pursued into the Priory of Huntingdon and arrested there by Richard Leder, ' bailiff of the Lord the King.' The fugitive had mistakenly supposed that any religious house could afford him sanctuary (891. 219).

At the best the protection of sanctuary availed only for a season, and then the culprit must needs abjure the realm and make his way with all speed to the nearest port, to be for the rest of his days an outcast, a wanderer upon the face of the earth. Sometimes even the abjuration could be evaded. In the sixth year of Edward I, Elyas de Cruce Roesia [Royston] and William le Messager de Keninton ' put themselves through fear within the church of Hitchin.' After some parley with their pursuers they agreed to leave St. Andrew's ' and go by the King's peace.' There was evidently some misunderstanding about the terms of their departure. ' You have abjured the realm,' said their pursuers. ' Not so,' argued Elyas and William, ' we went spontaneously and voluntarily without any impediment from the said church, and are still in the country and in no way malefactors.' And they argued to such purpose that the twelve jurors, empanelled to decide the issue, gave the verdict in their favour (890. 323. m. 50).

As a rule, however, the sons of iniquity found it safer to brazen it out in the Court. With the jury a mere body of partisan witnesses, with neighbours always willing to perjure themselves for a gallon of ale, with the twelve confederates styled compurgators (vii) skilfully discharging their function of false-

vi. ' Thwytel ': an Anglo-Saxon word for knife. It was in use until the sixteenth century at least. Chaucer, in the Reeve's Tale, 3933, describing the Miller of Trumpington, says: ' A scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose.'

vii. ' When one shall wage his Law, he shall bring with him vi, viii or xii of his neighbours to sweare with him, much like unto the oath which they make in the Civill Law to purge others of any crime laid against them, which are called compurgators ' (*Termes de la Ley*, 1641, 195). Professor Holdsworth

hood on oath, it is not surprising that the trial usually ended in the prisoner's acquittal. The Court was nearly as safe as the sanctuary. If the worst came to the worst, one could always wriggle out of the extreme penalty by pleading benefit of clergy. It was better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men; and it was a poor fool who did not take the precaution to learn off his 'neck-verse' before he came into Court. Those rustics who could not do even so much were quite prepared to swing. One has the impression that to them life was a game of adventure, with some frolic in it as well as hard knocks. One had to take the rough with the smooth. The loser was expected to pay according to the rules without squealing.

IV

With these preliminary observations on the course of justice in medieval Hitchin we may begin to pick and choose our way through its calendar of crime. Of the earliest and perhaps the bloodiest period of all not much has survived. A merciful oblivion covers it from our prying eyes. It is, as historians are wont to say, 'before the memory of man.' In the chapter on the manor (*supra*, Vol. I, pp. 29–37) something has been written of the evil that was wrought by the Baliols, and especially by Hugh de Baliol, who was the *consiliarius iniquissimus*, the most wicked adviser, of the most wicked of our Kings. But no cry comes across the centuries from those who rotted in his dungeons. No word from those Hitchin bondmen who raised their brown and horny hands and cursed the cruel Castle of Deneslai, whose walls scowled upon them from above. The evil that they did and the evil that they suffered have not been chronicled. The world was not their friend, nor was the world's law. It was a great age for the powerful and rich; but for the humble and meek it was a time 'when God and his Saints slept.'

So far as Hertfordshire is concerned the Assize Rolls are not extant before 1177, and even so you have to hunt a long while before finding any record of this parish. But if you read them in conjunction with the Patent Rolls you can get many a

writes: 'Compurgators were more concerned with civil than with criminal cases, and were not listened to when the Crown was a party.' By Blackstone's day compurgation was 'out of use,' but not 'out of force.' It was finally abolished in 1833. See Holdsworth, *op. cit.*, i. 305–8.

glimpse of the disorderly condition of these parts. Twice in the year 1265 are the officers of the Hitchin Hundred, and the officers of the county in general, admonished ' to repress the insolence of those malefactors who disturb the peace and with horses and arms commit depredations and homicides by day and night ' (889. 50 Hen. III, m. 38d). In the Assize Rolls one is vouchsafed a more particular account. The descriptions of the eight murders committed here in 1278 are given in some detail, e.g. ' Unknown malefactors met John le Despencer as he was coming from the market of Hicce and slew him and fled. Robert de Halden, one of the neighbours, did not come but is not a malefactor. The vills of Watton, Welewe, Monfichet, Dickenswell do not come fully to enquire. Therefore in mercy ' (890. 323. m. 39d). In the same Roll (m. 50) Robert de Neddeler [maker of needles] and John le Mouner [miller] are indicted ' for having frequently exchanged good and entire pence with Jews to be clipped for clipped pence.' One of those who ' stand ' for Robert le Neddeler bears the interesting Biblical name of Simon the Tanner.

Proceeding to the Roll for 1287 one finds Nicholas de Hicch, a monk, murdering William de Biwell in the Hitchin fields (890. 328. m. 9d). The jurors certify that the monk has no chattels and is not in their tithing, *quia clericus*. They have also to certify the death of William Stuburn, who died by his own hand [*gratis se ipsum suspendit*], and so forfeited his chattels, worth 44s., to the Crown (890. 328. m. 5). They testify further that John, the son of Robert the Brown of Hitchin, along with four other malefactors unknown, waylaid John the Faber, who was driving with Alice, his wife, in a certain cart upon the Offley road. ' The aforesaid John they bound and the aforesaid Alice they killed, and immediately afterwards fled. And John acknowledges himself a malefactor and is banished out of the realm ' (890. 328. m. 6).

V

In addition to the Assize Rolls there are the Gaol Delivery Rolls, whose membranes, though full of matter, are not so frequently consulted by the student. I will cite three cases from these Rolls. It is the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle in the year 1333. Walter Fox of ' Hiche ' and his boon companions, John le Hunt and Thomas Pouchard, are at Hatfield on their

MARKET PLACE, HITCHIN, HERTS.

From a painting attributed to Birket Foster, about 1850

way back from market at St. Albans. There, by a lucky chance, they are able to steal and get away with two horses value 20s. and an ox and a cow of the same worth. These they drive before them to the house of William atte dane at Codicote, and suggest that he should buy them. He has a shrewd notion how they came by what they are so eager to sell, and he knows the risk of a receiver. A hard bargain is struck. He doles out the paltry sum of twelve shillings to be divided amongst them. They then proceed on their way.

At Maydencrouch [Maydencroft], within the parish of Hitchin, they espy John atte felde and other hirelings [*mercenarios*], also 'coming from the market of St. Albans.' Mild, defenceless creatures they appear, unlikely to put up any fight. One glance is enough to persuade Fox and his desperadoes to fall upon this easy prey and plunder them of a 'short blue courtepye [cloak] value 18d. and of 4s. in money.' They would have taken more but for Philip Copman, who, for all that he was only a hireling, showed an unexpected spirit. In the end he was overcome and killed, as Christina his wife alleged, in her very arms, '*inter brachia sua*.' Thereupon the murderers flee. A hue and cry is raised. Hunt and Pouchard get clear, but Fox is hunted over hill and dale, and at last, after a long run, is 'taken at Windrugge.' Brought back to Hitchin, he is indicted before Richard de Norton, coroner. 'And afterwards on the Sunday came Christina, who was the wife of the said Philip Copman and accused the said Walter of the death of her husband feloniously killed in her arms, and she found pledges before the coroner for the prosecuting of her appeal, viz. Hugh Rommer and Robert Copman. And immediately afterwards the said Walter Fox acknowledged himself to be a robber and that he did feloniously kill the said Philip.' Before he is hanged, however, Fox gives his confederates away. He claims as 'approver' a full inquiry [*totam inquisitionem*]. The sheriff is 'ordered to cause as many and such' [*tot et tal*] as have knowledge of the matter to appear at the next gaol delivery. Pouchard and Hunt and William atte dane are taken in hiding and 'mainperned' [*bound over*] for the next Assizes. At the trial Hunt 'says he is not guilty and puts himself upon the country' [*asks for a jury*]; but, unfortunately for him, the jury say 'he is guilty. Therefore he is to be hanged. No goods.' As for Pouchard and William atte dane, their fate does not appear upon the record. For the sake of the

good citizens of Hitchin one may hope that these culprits also got what they deserved (891. No. 214).

Here, more briefly stated, is the second case. It is again the feast of St. Andrew, at that time the patron saint of Hitchin Church. It is 1381, the year of the Peasants' Revolt, a year when no man's life or property was safe. Enter Simon Irissh, formerly servant of William Legat of Preston, into the dwelling house of John Maundeville of Hicchen. Here also it is a courtepye that is 'plundered,' but one worth as much as three shillings. Over-elated with his success, Simon goes to break into the farmhouse of Lambert Legat of Kingswalden, and carries off 'a ploucheyne with an iron collar.' This time his Irish luck is out. The Hitchin bailiff, John Walcote, catches him as he comes away with the plough-chain in his hand. The law is set in motion. On the feast of St. Ambrose, the sheriff of Hertford, Edward de Benstede, holds his 'turn.' Four men 'appear for the town of Hicchen.' On the feast of St. Margaret the Virgin, Robert Belknapp and Henry Asty hold their Assize. On the morrow of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, exit Simon Irissh, who, in plainer words, is hanged (891. 216. m. 233).

The third case we will cite is also of that wild and lawless year. Here we may quote the very words of the Roll, for they are short and to the point: 'John Everard, taken by an indictment before Robert fitz-Geffery, one of the coroners of the lord the King, of this that on the Wednesday next after the feast of Saint Luke in the fifth year of the reign of King Richard II the same John and John Lacy strove together at Hicchen and the said John Lacy rushed upon (*irruit*) the aforesaid John Everard and wounded him badly, and the said John Everard in his own defence struck the said John Lacy with a baselard [a long dagger] under the left side [*sub latere sinistro*] whereby the same John Lacy died on the Monday following' (891. 216/2/. m. 261) (viii).

VI

There are certain reflections which are bound to force themselves upon the notice of those who study these Rolls. It is

viii. This is not an isolated case. On the very same skin of parchment is a description of the striving together (*litigabant ad-invicem*) of William Stanhow and Denis Ode. As Denis rushed upon (*irruit super*) William, the said William in his defence struck the said Denis with a baselard under the left side, by which he also 'received his death.'

surprising, for one thing, to see the amount of extraneous crime in which this parish was involved. One would have thought it had criminals enough of its own; but it was always having to hunt for those criminals of other tithings who passed through or stayed furtively within this ' great thoroughfare town.'

In 1351, for example, there comes an urgent letter from Andrew Aubrey, Mayor of London, to the Bailiffs and Good Folk of the town of Hechene. Adam Tristram of Hechene, he says, who had been bound apprentice to Richard Dygoun, weaver, had suddenly quitted contrary to his oath, and was understood to be residing in their town. They are desired to assist the said Richard to recover him as they would wish their folk to be treated in the like case or weightier. ' The Lord have you in his keeping ' (903. 38).

Again, in 1366, there is a ' Request to the Bailiffs and Good Folk of Cambridge, Hatfield, Baldock and Hechene to seek after one John Baudoc (Baldock), styling himself " the son of the King of Judæa," who had stolen a light-grey horse and a chestnut horse with saddle and bridle from Simon Walsshman and Hugh Snewe, citizens of London ' (903. 140).

Very often, too, they were called upon to answer for those of their own tithing who committed crimes outside, as, for example, in 1322, when Andrew of Hiche was charged, along with the Mayor, the Bailiffs and many townsmen of Cambridge, with ' attacking and spoiling divers inns of the Masters and Scholars of the University, climbing the walls, breaking the doors and windows, mounting by ladders into the solars and assaulting the said Masters and Scholars, imprisoning some, mutilating others, and killing Walter de Shelton; and also with carrying away all they could of the books and other the goods of the Masters and Scholars so that no person dare go to the University of the said Town for study ' (889. 15 Edw. II, pt. 2, m. 17d).

In the second place, one cannot fail to mark the increase in licentiousness, if not in crime, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Was this due, as Maitland used to think, to the abuse of the Benefit of Clergy, or must we lay some part of it at the door of the mendicant friars who dispensed all too prodigally the grace of absolution? It was a little thing to confess your sin and purchase indulgence from a friar whom you had not seen before and might never see again. Quite another thing to make a clean breast of it to your own parish

priest, and have the feeling that he was thinking of it again every time you met him in the street. And then, again, how easy it was, as you listened to these friars preaching at the Market Cross, to believe that theirs was the way of salvation, and that 'anyone dying in the Franciscan habit should never come into condemnation.' The number of sinners buried in this fashion grew to be enormous.

VII

Another reflection arising from these Rolls is that the local Justices of the Peace set a very poor example to the common people of Hitchin. There are so many whom it is only possible to describe in old Burton's words: '*Sicuti titulis primi fuere, sic et vitiis*—as they were first in rank so in rottenness.' From this black catalogue of high malefactors we will select but two. Here, from the Patent Rolls of 1352, is just one scandalous episode in the life-crime of Robert de Kendale, son of Robert de Kendale, Lord of Hitchin Manor (see Vol. I, pp. 37, 38 and 111), and himself a Justice and a man of mark: 'Whereas Margaret, late the wife of Hamo le Strange, made a solemn vow of chastity and of entering the religion of the minoresses, and was coming to the King to enfeoff him of her inheritance in the company of Robert de Kendale, then Knight of the Marshalsey of the Household, who had knowledge of her vow, and mainprised before good men to conduct her safely to the King, the said Robert ravished her as she was coming in his company at Kynefare Heath against her will and imprisoned her and carried away her goods; wherefore the King appoints Richard, Earl of Arundel and John Delves as Justices to inquire on the oath of good men touching this felony and to determine the same' (889. 26 Edw. III, Pt. ii, 15d).

In comparison with this perfidious and blackguardly outrage the straightforward felonies of John de Beverle, Lord of Minsden, seem almost venial. By some historians he has been accused of more crimes than the many he admitted. They have confused him with a contemporary of the same name, a famous fishmonger of London, who in 1365 was indicted for 'burglary of the Mother Church of Lincoln.' But Beverle's 'true bill' was fairly long. As a young man, 1344, he had been concerned in 'lifting' a cargo worth some £5,000 lying in the holds of Sir Robert de

Morle's ships at Lowestoft (889. 18 Edw. II, Pt. 2, m. 49d). In 1357 he killed one Thomas Capoun 'in a hot conflict [*impetuose*] and not of malice,' whereupon the King, in whose service he was, granted him a pardon (889. 31 Edw. III, Pt. iii, m. 7) (ix). Ten years later one finds him engaged in a feud with the Earl of Cambridge, in the course of which his servant, Thomas Elsyng, slew Robert, a retainer of the aforesaid Earl. For him also Beverle obtains a pardon (889. 41 Edw. III, Pt. ii, m. 26). Indeed, one finds him flouting the law and getting pardons for all and sundry. He had only to ask and it was done. The old King, Edward III, could refuse him nothing. Here and there in the Patent Rolls can be counted over twenty-five pardons for murders and affrays 'at the supplication of John Beverle the King's Esquire.' He was needing them on his own account to the very end. In the last year of his life, 1381, this hoary-headed sinner broke into the closes and houses of Margaret Wyssh of Lichfield, wounded and imprisoned her, assaulted her servants and carried away her goods (889. 4 Rich. III, Pt. ii, m. 26d).

Another reflection that emerges from these Rolls is that the majority of medieval crimes were committed not by malice prepense or out of criminal intent, but, as was said of Beverle, *impetuose*. There was nothing calculating or middle-aged about the Middle Ages. Things were said and done in hot blood or headlong 'on the top folly of youth.' In the result they were fierce and terrible enough, but they were for the most part unpremeditated, done with the sudden, irresponsible ferocity of children. All was over in a second. The woman who one moment threatened 'to drive a spit into her neighbour's guts' was, the next moment, her inseparable and bosom friend. Apart from this madness, due not a little to superfluous health, there were other contributing causes. But for the grace of God, a 'cup of malmsey and some well-spic'd bruage,' a tankard of the far-famed Hitchin mead would waken the criminal who is latent in every man. Again, there was the Devil. To medieval men and women he was startlingly near and omnipresent, and he

ix. In early medieval days the King was constantly intervening to save the necks of his servants. In 1289, for example, we imprisoned William de Oke at Hitchin for the wholesale slaughter of Gilbert de Brockhampton, Thomas son of Thomas de la More, Juliana de la More, Edith de la More and Edith Hurthevene; whereupon the King signified to the local Justices that his servant had been charged 'out of hatred and malice and not because he is guilty thereof,' and in consequence ordered his release (Cal. Close Rolls, 1288–1296, p. 21).

tempted them at every turn. Even the law recognized his infernal presence and his complicity in almost every crime. The indictments of our Hitchin folk are framed in such an understanding way as to suggest that the natural goodness of the prisoner had been overborne by forces stronger than his own free will; the sad results have been brought about ' at the instigation of Satan,' or ' no doubt at Satan's prompting,' or ' by the beguiling of the powers of Darkness.' It explains why so many were acquitted, or dealt with in so merciful a way. Then, too, there were those accidents which will happen in the best-regulated towns. They may cause the death of several citizens, but, let no one mistake, it is not murder nor even homicide. 'Tis merely ' chance-medley,' that blessed word which covers such a multitude of crimes. Crowds will be crowds and apprentices will be apprentices. People should not get in the way when blows are being exchanged.

Here, by way of illustration, is a riot of the milder sort: ' The Jurors say that, upon the Wednesday in the feast of St. Nicholas the Bishop, the third year of the reign of Henry VI, Reginald Cockayn of Almessho and John Sturgeon [for whom see above, Vol. I, pp. 40, 82, 93–4, 140], Ralph Wettenale (x), yeoman of Hicchen with an unbridled multitude of unknown men, armed in a war-like manner, assembled at Hicchen, and lay in wait there to beat and wound Robert Leventhorp, and made such an assembly and rout then and there, that grave and manifest disturbance of the tranquillity and peace of the Lord the King resulted (*accrevit*) to a very great part of the county of Hertford, and principally to the community of the town of Hicchen, for fear of which assembly and rout the said community did not dare to attend to its business ' (Chancery Miscellanea, Cal. 62, file 4, No. 132).

VIII

Let us leave the dust of this tumult to settle, and come back later to see if the people of Hitchin are behaving any better in good Queen Bess's day. On the whole perhaps they are, though

x. An old offender and one who was to offend again. On the Saturday in Easter week, in the fifth year of Henry VI, he ' broke into the close and houses of Thomas atte hoo, esquire, at Offlye and stole ten shillings in money, two gold rings worth 3s. 4d., a belt ornamented with silver worth 7s., two towels worth 3s. 4d. and a pound of pepper worth 18d.' As an alias he used the name of John Rand (891, No. 219).

STURGEON'S TOMB IN THE SOUTH CHAPEL OF ST. MARY'S

Drawn by Geoffry Lucas from the surviving fragments

the passions of men do not alter greatly with the passing of the years. Certainly there are not so many riots and not so many murders. The high adventure of the seas, the far-flung routes of trade, the incessant conflict with Spain, had done much to occupy the thoughts of men. There is less 'occasion of idleness,' that 'mother and root of all vices, whereby hath insurged and sprung and daily insurgeth and springeth continual thefts, murders and other heinous offences and great enormities to the high displeasure of God, the inquietation and damage of the King and people, and to the marvellous disturbance of the commonweal of the Realm' (22 Hen. VIII, cap. 12) (xi).

On the other hand, one does detect some new varieties of crime. In medieval days, for example, one hears but little of witchcraft in the courts. In Elizabethan and Stuart days one hears too much of it: '1579–80. The jurors for the Queen present that Joan Danne of Hytchen, spinster, being a common sorceress and enchantress, as well of men as of beasts and other things, not having the fear of God before her eyes, but instigated and seduced by the Devil and of her malice aforethought on 1 November 21 Elizabeth by force and arms bewitched and enchanted a certain John Sympson of Hytchen, yeoman, by reason of which the said John Sympson from the said 1 November until the last day of January then next following greatly languished, against the peace and form of the statute,' etc. (Assize Papers, 35/22). When in due time Mistress Danne was carried off by the Devil, she was succeeded in her unholy trade by two other Hitchin hags, Mary Bychance and Widow Palmer, who added considerably to their stock-in-trade of charms and spells and philtres by consorting with John Palmer, Widow Palmer's brother-in-law, at Norton. This 'notorious Witch' practised his black art in this neighbourhood for over sixty years, and had two 'familiars,' the one in the form of a dog which he called 'George,' and the other in the likeness of a woman whom he

xi. Professor Holdsworth writes: 'I think the improvement was largely due to the work of the Star Chamber, a court open to all from king to beggar.' Certainly the testimony of contemporary writers and of modern historians supports Palgrave's view that 'its vigilant equity was the safeguard of the weak and feeble, and that the poor looked to it for aid.' Lambarde calls the Star Chamber 'a most noble and praiseworthy court.' 'It is,' says Coke, 'the most honourable court (our Parliament excepted) that is in the Christian world.' 'It is,' says Bacon, 'one of the sagest and noblest institutions of this kingdom.' See 'Select Cases in the Star Chamber' (*Selden Society*), Palgrave's *Council*, 104–108, and Holdsworth, *op. cit.*, i. 504–8.

called 'Jezabell.' He had won his reputation, however, by success in that ancient and simple expedient of destroying one's enemies by 'framing pictures of them in the clay,' and then consuming them with fire. It was said, for example, of Goodwife Pearls of Norton that, 'whilst her image was consuming, she lay in miserable torment, and when it was quite consumed she died.' All this because she had called upon Palmer once or twice and asked him as her tenant to pay his arrears of rent. In the end Palmer tried this trick once too often, and was himself miserably tormented and destroyed; but not before he had given away the fact that Mary Bychance and Widow Palmer were 'bound to the Divel,' and just as guilty as he.

There were, of course, witches *and* witches. Some were inclined to be not harmful but helpful with their necromantic art. The most respectable amongst them practised under the name and style of 'white witches' and 'diviners,' or disguised themselves as alchemists. For example, there was Mary Cocker, whom Thomas Sadleir of Temple Dinsley had to examine in 1587, 'touching a vision or ghost that appeared to her in the night season, and warned her to tell the Queen that there was a jewell in making for her, which if she received would be to her destruction' (Cal. S.P.D., 1581–1590, p. 404). Contemporary with this white witch there was a celebrated diviner living at Ickleford, a mile or two out of Hitchin, to whom those in trouble were tempted to resort. If the town constable could not help you—and he was generally a poor thing to put your trust in—you might do worse than visit Thomas Harding. Robert Dickenson, 'having a wastcote purloyned from him,' Goodwife Strat, 'having a parcel of newe cloth stollen away,' William Kinge, 'having lost two horses which were stollen from him,' these and many others are known to have consulted him.

Some faith was put in his prescription against the plague: 'certain words in a scroll of parchment,' to be suspended from the patient's neck. But so many of his patients died that people began to disbelieve in Thomas Harding. In 1590 this so-called diviner was taken like any common wizard to the county gaol, and lost all his fame and reputation in a cloud of witness. The saddest deception urged against him was on the part of Mary Pennefather: 'Having a woman childe of the age of fower yeares which could neither goe nor speke, she caryed her to Thomas

AN ALCHEMIST AT WORK

From a painting by Pieter Breughel, 1558

Harden, because it is noysed in the country that he is a wyse man and can skyll of many thinges, who told her that her childe was a changelinge but that he would in tyme helpe her. The next tyme that she came unto him he bade her to take a nutt and to pick out the curnell and fiyll it with quicksilver, and to stop the hole with waxe, and to bynd a thred across over the nutte and to lay it under a pyllow wher the chylde should lye, and that should helpe it. Her childe having therebye noe helpe, she repared to him againe, and then he bad her to sett the childe in a chare uppon her dungell by the space of an hower uppon a sonny day, which she did and the childe had no helpe.' She gave him six pence for his reward ' and promysed more ' (xii) (72. 1. 3).

IX

Another feature of this later period is a growing formality in the administration of justice. In medieval days a criminal was dragged into the nearest Justice's hall and tried *instanter*. By Queen Elizabeth's time the Hitchin Justices sat in state in their appointed sessions at the Sun. Next door to them, ' in the great white chamber ' [*in alb' magno cubiculo*] of the Angel, sat the Commissary or Surrogate in his Court of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon. It was his province to hear offences of a spiritual kind. There, for example, in 1590, Margery Blocke is ' pronounced contumacious and excommunicated ' for defaming one John Tristram. Tristram himself is tried for ' offering violence to William Draper in the church ' (xiii). There, in 1593, Elizabeth Gill confesses her sin with John Mercer and is ordered ' to do her penance on Sundaye next in *penitente vesture*.' There, in 1594, John Smith is called to show cause why at the time of divine service at St. Mary's he, on behalf of his own daughter, forbade the banns of marriage between William Townende of Hitchin and Widow Andrews of the same parish. There, in 1596, George Girforde and Francis Huckell were charged, ' for

xii. For the history of witchcraft in England and the law concerning it see Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, i. pp. 1–103, and Holdsworth, *op. cit.*, iv. 507–511.

xiii. This case affords an interesting example of jurisdictions overlapping; for it was brought not only before the Archdeacon as a matter of brawling in church, but before the Justices as a common assault, and before the Court Leet as a ' presentment ' by the Homage of an offending manor tenant.

that they did go to carte in the fields of Hitchin, the day being a holy day, and thereby profaned it' (xiv) (182. m. 12 verso, 40 verso, 187 verso, 196, 296 verso, and 333 verso) (xv).

As for the criminal and secular business at the Sun, it was more efficiently if not so expeditiously transacted. Undoubtedly it took longer to get men hanged, though the words that record it are the soul of brevity: '*Po se cul ca null sus* = *Ponit se culpabilem*, *catalla nulla*, *suspendatur* = he puts himself guilty, no chattels (i.e. for forfeiture), let him be hanged.' It took still longer to hang women, for—matrons or maids—they had all learned the trick of pleading pregnancy, and were given nine months in which to make it good. But one is glad to see that not so many felons are escaping on frivolous or technical defences through the meshes of the law. Once upon a time, for example, when the confused or careless clerk had written 'Hereford' instead of 'Hertford' in the indictment—and he did it amazingly often—the prisoner was quick to take advantage of the flaw and claimed to be acquitted (xvi). The Justices of Queen Elizabeth's day were not such slaves to the written word; they gave leave to amend wherever it was needed. One is glad also to see that the benefit of clergy has been curtailed (xvii), that there is no longer any intimidation and but little bribery.

You may measure the improvement best of all in the cases that are brought before the Court. Let us take the last ten years of the sixteenth century and the first thirty years of the seventeenth century. The country at this period swarms with vagrants; it is impoverished by years of famine and decimated by the plague. Yet with all this there is a marked decrease in

xiv. In a similar case of the same year the parties replied that they only worked 'tyll eighte of the clocke in the morning and were both at morning and eveninge prayer' (182. m. 333 v.).

xv. For an exposition of the criminal jurisdiction in Ecclesiastical Courts generally see W. H. Hale's *Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes, 1475–1640*, and Holdsworth, *op. cit.*, i. 619–621.

xvi. Professor Holdsworth cites a similar case in which the misspelling of 'murderavit' for 'murdravit' saved a prisoner's skin. See his account of the accuracy required in indictments, *op. cit.*, iii. 616–620.

xvii. By the Statute 4 Hen. VII, c. 14, it was enacted that 'the privilege of the church' should be allowed but once to such as were not in orders; and that every person asking his clergy on the ground that he was in orders should produce his 'letters of orders' or a certificate of his bishop before the court. Furthermore, every person converted and allowed his benefit of clergy should be marked upon the brawn of the left thumb (M for murder and F for felony) before being handed over to the bishop. For the later statutes restricting benefit of clergy see Holdsworth, *op. cit.*, iii. 297–299.

serious crime. For the most part they are petty cases that come up for hearing in the Sessions at the Sun.

Let us sit awhile at the back of the Court and hold a watching brief. 1590. 'Call Thomas Kent of Aston.' He answers to his name and comes before the bar. 'The charge against you, Thomas Kent, is that with a Staff you did maliciously strike Thomas Bettes also of Aston, yeoman, in the chancel of Hitchin church, drawing blood.' We are too far off to catch what he says in defence, though we long to know why two men of Aston should want to fight a duel in the chancel of our church. But we do hear the Justices sending him for trial. It is too serious an offence, they fear, for them to try, for the Statute under which Kent is accused provides that any person convicted of

A HITCHIN GLEANER

striking another with a weapon in any church shall have one of his ears cut off, or in default of losing his ears shall be branded on the cheek (72. 1. 4). Quarter Sessions shall decide.

1603, 30th August. 'Call Edward Hurste.' He in his turn stands forward to face the accusation and the evidence of Goodwife Robyns, who for a woman speaks up uncommonly well. One can hear every word she says: 'I being the wyfe of John Robyns, labourer of Hitchin, did go into the corn feyld of the parish of Hitchin to gleane graine as is usuall for all pore to doe, and being on a land whear no grayne was uncarryed wythin the space of thre acres by judgment of those which doe know ytt, Edward Hurste, the sonne of Daniel Hurste beinge farmer of the tythe, there meeting me, asked me wheather I went. I

answered " to gleane, I cannot tell wheather." Whereupon the said Edward inadvysedlye came to me and did stryke me suddanlye wyth a pitchforke, being a sufficient forke to worke wyth, on the head and on the loynes, until he brake his forke, playnlye to be proved by those which wear wyth me in the field, by means whereof I could not labour to do any busynesse to sustain me and my children and doe my busynesse for my husband, neyther yet can, the which hath bin not only greate hinderance to their maintenance, but I am still without my health. The markes of the blowes wear seene and knowen by these my neighbours of honest fame and behavyour, Goodwyfe Hobbes, Widow Brownsall, Goodwyfe Mytten and Goodwyfe Turrell ' (72. 1. 36).

The goodwives are so garrulous about their so-called evidence that we shall have to miss the other cases. Also it would be pleasant to go down to the Sun parlour and have a ' refresher.' As we bow to their Worships and sidle by the Clerk's table, he thoughtfully hands us the list. It is a pity we cannot stay. There should be some merriment in what is still to come. Henry Thraie, brickmaker of Hitchin, is up once again ' for that he and William Harold, labourer, doe usually walke in the nighte without lawful reason.' We know them very well: ' *Arcades ambo*, *id est* blackguards both ' (72. 1. 42). That impudent fellow, John Cooke of Gosmore, is to answer not so much for selling beer without a licence—that is a mere trifle—but for boasting in his great beery voice that ' they were fools that would give money for a licence ' (72. 1. 37). William Lane of Walsworth and William Crawley of Offley, gent., have been ' harbouring rogues and vagabonds ' again (72. 1. 54). John Browne of Hitchin, brickmaker, has been assaulting ' Edmund Lilly by striking him with an earthen pot upon the lips, causing three wounds ' (72. 5. 98). Edward Jeeves of Hitchin, innkeeper, has insulted Thomas Woodward by ' refusing to sell him a quart of beer for one penny ' (72. 5. 139). Down at the bottom of the list are some ' sturdy vagabonds ' waiting to be dispatched, one of whom, for better success in begging, had ' feigned himself to be dumb,' and the other, ' a counterfeit Bedlam,' had feigned himself to be mad (892).

X

A few years later the whole of England went mad in the Civil War; and it is grievous to watch the efficiency of the

magistrates and the integrity of the minions of the law giving way under the strain. Fortunately there was less to do; for most of those who should have been in gaol were fighting with the forces. But those criminals who stayed at home had no longer the same respect for justice. On all hands one hears 'peremptory saucy fellows' uttering 'many uncivil, slighting and insufferable speeches too tedious and unfit to relate,' to the 'scorn and affront of those in authority.'

> 'Obedience is a stranger in the land,
> Hardly subjective to the magistrate,
> For Englishmen do all subjection hate.

Worse still, one suspects that the constables are taking advantage of the times and beginning to line their pockets: 'Presentment that John Monck, bailiff of the half-hundred of Hitchin, by colour of his office exacted from William Lilly 12d. for excusing him from appearing on the jury' (72. 5. 283). Nevertheless, justice of a sort was done even in the worst days of the war. In the tumult caused by Prince Rupert's attack on Hitchin in 1643 one is pleased to detect the still, small voice of Nathaniel Hobbs, mercer of Hitchin, invoking the assistance of the law. Whatever may happen about Rupert's threat to plunder the town, he is not going to have his goods despoiled. 'There was a piece of stuff,' he says in his information, 'called *per petuana*, measuring 24 yards, lying upon the bulke of my shop, which piece Katherine Picks saw a man secret under his sinamon-coloured coat, whereupon, being informed by her, I did pursue the man, and, having caught him about half a mile from Hitchin, caused the constable to apprehend him' (72. 1. 70).

You will observe that it was Hobbs and not the constable who did the heavy work. And that is characteristic of the time; for throughout the Civil War and Commonwealth the headborough, bailiff, watchman or whatever you like to call him, was functioning less and less. The trouble was that you could not get a decent man to take this thankless office: '1657. Presentment to this Quarter Sessions of the county of Hertford that the inhabitants of several parishes do present inefficient men to be constables and headboroughs, such as cannot read nor write, prophane swearers and drunkards and alehouse keepers' (72. 1. 121). We at Hitchin were no better than the rest. Abraham Slow, Josias Bum—you can tell from the very names of our

constables what manner of men they were: 'staid, heavy, indifferent,' as Leigh Hunt afterwards described them, 'more coat than man, pondering, yet not pondering, old but not reverend, immensely useless.' They see nothing, they hear nothing, they do nothing, except send in their quarterly reports and draw their quarterly allowance. And what reports they are! 'All things are in good order for ought I know: Nothing presentable but Omny Beny: All things is peacable and Quiat: We have made sarch for vagarantes and Roges and find non and all is Omnibus Benae a corden to my warrant: All things in our parish and hambletts are all in good order to the best of our severall knowledges.'

Omnibus Benae! And yet the Court Leet knows well enough that things are far from well, even in the godly dispensation of the Commonwealth. Over the head of the constable they have to present such as 'have been found in a suspitious naughty house and can not give any good account of themselves'; such common, profane swearers as 'swear by my Maker or by the name of God'; such scandalous victuallers as John Richards of Charlton, 1653, who 'suffers divers persons to sit drinking overmuch in his house on the Lord's Day' (72. 1. 104). The vicar, Thomas Kidner, is driven by the misconduct of his people to send for a copy of John Downame's *Foure Treatises tending to disswade all Christians from the Abuses of Swearing, Drunkenesse, Whoredome and Bribery*, and he reads them to his flock instead of sermons. If that much-vaunted decade from 1648 to 1658 was really, as they said, a 'paradise for Puritans,' it was one which had its fatal Tree of Knowledge, its Serpent and its Woman.

XI

Nor was the Restoration the paradise for Pagans that it promised to be. Almost before the shouting had died down and the last mug of ale was spent, it became clear that the easy-going Monarch was not as easy as he seemed. People were not going to be allowed to do just as they liked, after all. Moreover, it was not only the King but the Cavalier Justices who had come into their own again; those mighty people who for ten long years had been put down from their seats, and who were now resolved to make the humble and meek know who were their masters. One sees the reins of authority tightening, and the

'MORE COAT THAN MAN'

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

common people putting on once more, as by habit, the ancient yoke of obedience. When John Hurst of Hitchin refused to serve as a juror at the Assizes of 1660, he was given the full penalty of £5, and in default of payment was promptly sent to prison (Herts Q.S. Court for January 7, 1660/1, f. 84d). As swift and dire a punishment was meted out to Richard Kidd of Hitchin, 'for refusing to keep watch and ward when called upon to do so by the constable, and also for persuading his neighbours from it' (72. 1. 299); and even the great Lady Sadleir of Temple Dinsley was punished 'for refusing to pay the constable's rate.'

Now and then you meet a Roundheaded townsman with some spirit left in him. For example, Henry Smith, who was 'taken at Hitchin in the apparell of a woman' in 1666, showed fight like any man (72. 1. 187). That same year James Denham was 'up' for 'abuseinge and lameinge a Head Borrow of the parish of Hitchin'; and in 1673 Sir Ralph Radcliffe committed for trial William and Judith Chambers of Hitchin 'for rescuing their son out of the hands of William Heard, the constable of Hitchin, who since cannot be found' (894. 5). One may infer from these assaults that the constables were not so 'immensely useless' in this period, that they were beginning to perform their duties. More care is being taken also over their appointment. Sir John Spencer of Offley, a light of the local bench, was most particular about this. 'The lower Constableship,' as he used to say, quoting from Lambarde [*The Duties of Constables*, Ed. 1631, p. 5], 'is a very finger of the hand of the Constable of England.' 'To be the High Constable of Hitchin,' he writes in 1709, 'is a post of Honour which Mr. Sheppard is not ambitious of and requires greater abilities both of mind and purse than he pretends to be master of' (894. 8).

Spencer did more than choose able men to be constables; he instructed them about their powers—those considerable powers which derive not so much from Statute as from ancient custom and are recognized by common law. 'Of the extent of their powers,' comments Blackstone, 'considering what manner of men are for the most part put into their office, it is perhaps very well that they are generally kept in ignorance.' That was not Spencer's view. At all hazard he was for restoring the full rigour and terror of the law. You can mark the difference in the way his constables stride—and not shuffle—through the streets. You can see the sons of Belial slinking away from the

thunder of their voice and the sudden lightning of their eye. 'For not O'Baying me in my office when commanded' has become almost a capital offence; and woe betide those who show any spirit now. In 1706, when John Rabey 'threatened to stab the constables of Hitchin or any Justice of the Peace that should make an order to attach him,' he recovered consciousness to find himself nursing a broken and diminished head in the Hitchin Bridewell, there compelled to diet himself on 'the bread of adversity and water of affliction' for one calendar month of days (894. 11).

Another reform which Spencer and Sir Ralph Radcliffe carried through was the provision of a Bridewell for the town. It was high time, for the 'cage' that had been in use since Queen Elizabeth's day could no longer hold the gaol-birds that came in. With fifteen thousand bricks and three loads of timber, fetched from Breachwood Green, and 'two little windowes,' and eighty pounds of iron, they built something to withstand the wear and tear of the 'sons of violence.' To furnish this new house at the bottom of Tylers Street, they added a few plank beds, 'a block to knock hempe upon,' a 'whipin post,' and three other posts for madmen and desperate prisoners. Though this was accomplished at the modest cost of £43 4s. 5d., the people of Hitchin would not contribute more than £20, for they were at the same time being 'dunned' for £125 2s. 3d., their share of the new county gaol at Hertford (72. 1. 422); and besides, as one quite respectable citizen observed, 'you cannot tell how soon you may find yourself inside these strongholds of detention.'

XII

What with a new Bridewell and brand-new constables, the men of Hitchin found it difficult to commit as many crimes as they were accustomed to. But some of their deeds deserve to be recorded. The first concerns young James Whitney, better known in after years as 'Captain' James Whitney, the notorious highwayman. Born, as most of his biographers agree, at Stevenage, he was put apprentice to a butcher at Hitchin, and proceeded to teach his master a few tricks of the trade that till then he never knew. One day, for example, when the butcher came grumbling into the shop at having failed to buy a particularly fine calf, Whitney proposed that they should get it for

nothing, or, in plain words, steal it. Now the calf belonged to the keeper of an alehouse, who somehow got an inkling of what they meant to do. Losing no time, he set about to confound their knavish tricks. Luckily there was at the time lodging in his house a man with a performing bear, which the innkeeper took and placed in the stable where the calf was kept, at the same time removing the calf to other quarters. As soon as it was dark, young Whitney groped his way into the stable, and was fumbling about for the head-stall of the calf when suddenly he found himself gripped and clawed by some unknown monster, and cried out that 'the Devil had seized him'; whereupon his master rushed into the stable, and with the utmost difficulty rescued his terrified and sadly mauled apprentice (905).

It is hardly fair to Whitney to cite this the first and least glorious of his exploits. To do him full justice one should read the little chap-book entitled *The Life of Captain James Whitney, containing his most remarkable robberies and other adventures, continued to his execution near Smithfield Bars the first of February* 1691/2. It is a scurrilous production, done in the swaggering style of one who held a well-ordered life in horror and who scorned all law-abiding citizens for the cowards that they were. But it has great moments. Who that has once read it will ever forget the episode of the parson who had been made to 'stand and deliver' by Whitney and his gang? It was their wild whim to make him deliver other things than money. It was years since any of them had heard a sermon. They would hear one delivered there and then. Accordingly Mr. Warren, lecturer of the church at Greenwich, stood up on the King's highway and preached. Taking his text from the word T.H.E.F.T., and dividing his discourse into five headings, one for each of its five letters, he warned them at considerable length and with many a Scriptural citation of the end that awaited thieves. When the sermon was ended Whitney, on behalf of his comrades, replied in the same sanctimonious tones. They desired in some practical way to show their true sense of contrition. It was against their custom to make any 'Collection' except for their own fraternity, but they would at least pay tithes, and return him a tenth of what had just been taken (896).

Whitney, it is evident, was an artist to his finger-tips, and he died like an artist, too. 'Every man is handsome that goes to be hanged,' but Captain James, in the flower of his youth,

' dressed in a fine silk Night-Gown, a large white Wig, and a white beaver hat,' made a resplendently fine end. If he knew not how to live, at least he would show an admiring world how to die. Upon the day of his execution ' scaffolds were built and seats bespoken at pretty bumping prices in Balconies, Windows and Turrets,' and there were many wet eyes amongst the women in the crowd at ' the deep damnation of his taking off ' (896).

From these heights it is a ' drop,' indeed, to sink to the level of those lewd fellows of the baser sort who were also apprenticed to ' the art and mystery of crime ' at Hitchin. How drab their performances read, how snivelling and ill-considered their defences! In 1669 William Whitehead of Hitchin, who has been taken up for ' stealing certain netts and ferritts the goods of Sylvanus Rowley,' tries to make their Worships swallow this sorry tale: ' I happened to goe into a certaine ffeild to gather slowes, and there accidentally mett with a strange unknown person with ferrits and netts, and after some little discourse he begged to come home to my house and eate a hott lofe and drinke a pott of ale, and being there a little while hee left the said netts within my house ' (72. 1. 216). That sort of stuff was not likely to bamboozle Sir Ralph Radcliffe. In 1685 Henry Fisher of Hitchin is before the Bench ' for selling beer without a licence.' And all his drunken wits inspire him to say is that his wife sells vegetables and custards, and that her customers and neighbours who come to her house to eat the aforesaid vegetables and custards have been in the habit of sending for beer to the next alehouse and have drunk it in his house (894. 6). We are come into the period of slyness and deceit; there are a hundred and one new-fangled ways to defeat the ends of justice. One reads of Nathaniel Whitmore of Hitchin ' concealing Nathaniel Flower who is wanted for stealing a horse of considerable value from Thomas Perkeys of Horesheath ' (72. 1. 413). One reads of Thomas Browne of this parish refusing to prosecute Daniel Hodge ' for stabbing the said Browne's sow in his yard in the night.' Browne had compounded the felony and done quite well by it (894. 7). It is a time of sharks and artful dodgers, an age of approvers and receivers: all that underworld of knaves which Charles Hitchin described in his *A True Discovery of the Conduct of Receivers and Thief-Takers*, 1718—a tract which he printed at his own cost when he rose to be a Marshal of the

The True Effigies of James Whitney the Notorious Highwayman

City of London, and which he distributed gratis in order, as he said, to make the blind officers of the law to see.

Two other cases of this period should be brought to light if only for their singularity. In 1697 'a paper of scandalous verses, very much reflecting upon the King and government,' was found upon two men 'now in gaol on the suspicion of wandering about the county with counterfeit passes.' It was believed by the Justices that James Lawrenceson of Hitchin was either himself the Jacobite author of these verses or the circulator of them. They therefore sent him to Quarter Sessions to clear himself of any treasonable intent (72. 1. 427). In the following year they had to send a whole bevy of Hitchin women to Hertford 'for maliciously and violently striking, binding and almost strangling of Elizabeth the wife of Francis Zarvite.' This woman, it seems, had been breaking her marriage vows by consorting openly and scandalously with Ralph Thrale, father of the afterwards celebrated Henry Thrale of Offley. This was more than the matrons of Hitchin could stand, and a select company of them, Sarah Marshall, Elizabeth Howell, Susannah Sutton, Mary Hutting, Sarah Dellow and Eady Burrows proceeded to vindicate the reputation of their sex by taking the unhelpful law into their own hands. They themselves were made to smart for it, but they did not greatly mind. They had gained their end. They had so marred the beauty of the Zarvite that she did not trouble them again (894. 10).

XIII

It was just as well that this rough-and-ready form of justice was not punished out of existence, for throughout the Georgian era one marks a prodigal increase of crime and a corresponding slackness in the executive. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, writing in 1723, refers to a 'Bill Cooking up to have the word "not" taken out of the Commandments and inserted in the Creed.' 'Honour, virtue and reputation,' she adds, 'which we used to hear of in our nursery, are as much laid aside as crumpled ribbons.' Men and women were no longer 'eminent' for holy living and dying, but for cursing, swearing, drinking and all kinds of fashionable wickedness. And not only did they fall into these evil courses, but, as John Wesley complained, they gloried in them, 'Yea and avouch them in the face of the sun.'

If our informations speak true, the town was infested at that time with 'common scolds leading a lewd and unquiet life amongst their neighbours,' with 'persons of an indecent disposition, of profligate life and conversation,' with 'common and assiduous disturbers of the peace, originators of divers quarrellings, controversies and fights.' One suspects that the new habit of drinking gin had something to do with this degeneration. '1741. Nov. 18th. Paid helping Gin Tom to the Justices, 6d.' There is an unmistakable honesty about the passions of men too valiantly full of malt liquor. Their crimes are clean-handed, committed in daylight, done as it were by the act of God, even the God Bacchus. But those who soaked themselves in gin poisoned the very springs of crime. Their passions, as described in another Hitchin information, were 'odious and detestable,' as loathsome as Iago, as debauched as any Dutchman.

Here are one or two sordid instances of this decline: 1715. Indictment of Richard Welch 'for assaulting and frighting Rebecca Bodfish in to Fitts' (894. 13): 1727. Summons against Sarah Cullyford for assault. It appears from the evidence that 'she got up from her seat [in a Hitchin coffee-house] in a great passion and called Thomas Smith Rogue and Villain and other scurrilous words. And, when the said Thomas Smith at last sate down with a pipe in his hand and desired Mrs. Cullyford to be easy, she persisted in abuising of the said Smith and catched his pipe out of his hand and threw it into his face and broke it in severall pieces. Get you gone, she added, and took up a Broome and struck the said Smith over the head' (894. 16); 1729. Evidence taken against James Daniel of Hitchin. 'As he lay sleeping with a woman in a footpath in the field called Eighteen Acre Hole, one Thomas Pate came up and did waken the said James Daniel in a friendly manner, and advised him not to sleep on the ground; upon which the said J. D. arose and drew a pen-knife secretly and made an assault upon the body of Thomas Pate, and next on Edward Price, and next on George Fitzjohn, and lastly stabbed Barnaby Starr into the back privately, secretly, and at unawares to the hazard of the life of the said Barnaby Starr' (894. 17); 1754. Indictment of John Bayley 'for wilfully frighting and forcing the horse of Dr. Midwinter over an hedg whereby he was killed' (894. 19); 1765. Indictment against George Chalkley, tailor, 'for endeavouring to persuade

Sarah Lincoln of the parish of Hitchin to give arsenic to his brother Henry Taylor in order to poison him' (xviii).

Of slackness in the executive one could cite evidence without end. Too often magistrates were appointed of 'such as had gout in the understanding.' Not only were they lax in their office, but inclined to think lightly of the penal statutes when a couple of capons arrived at their hall door. Too often one finds the Clerk to the Magistrates selected from one of their own retainers, a man who had picked up a little knowledge by attending on common juries and considered himself a lawyer.

HITCHIN MAGISTRATE IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT WITH GOUT

Time, which is the essence of any offence, is to him a matter of no moment. In one charge of the period the learned Clerk, too lazy to verify the date, describes it as 'about the time when black cherries begin to ripen.' Too often the constable, 'contemptuously and for the sake of corrupt lucre,' would allow any astute offender 'to make himself to be absent.' Too often he wasted the substance of the parish in his own riotous living:

xviii. For a further example of this odious crime one has to proceed to the year 1809, when George Smith of Hitchin was accused of 'putting a quantity of arsenic into a pot of tea with intent to poison Josias Johnson and Elizabeth Stallybrass' (894. 29).

'1738. Dec. 7. Disbursments conveying John Burges to Hertford. For victuals and beer before we went out and by the way, 2s.: For three ordinarys and extraordinarys, 3s. 4d.: For money spent at finishing the Bill, 2s. 6d.' It is true that those who kept off the drink did show some signs of efficiency. There was Paul Williams for one, the soul of vigilance by day, and said to sleep with one eye open like a cat at night. If ever he went off duty as constable, it was to lend the churchwardens or overseers a hand: '1736. Oct. 5. Pd. William Gregory full with the small pox, 6d.: Pd. Paul Williams with him to Wimondly, 6d.' Again, there was James Driver, six foot four in his socks, and as smart in the whole length and breadth of him as any constable could be: '1737, May 16. Pd. John Moore for painting the constable's and headborough's staves, 8s.' If his brain was not quite as smart as his body, he knew where to go to furbish it, for Sir John Spencer of Offley Place had left a very competent successor: '1739. Jan. 10. Pd. going to see Sir Henry Penrice for advice, 1s.' (895).

But for the most part the constables were a set of old dodderers, 'who had the maximum of feet, the minimum of brains.' Sans sense, sans strength, sans legs, sans everything, you might call them a set of old women, for more than one woman was appointed. In 1765, Francis Field, the master of the House of Correction for the Half Hundred of Hitchin, being dead, 'his widow being very infirm, and in the 80th year of her age, prays to be made keeper of the said house.' And as no one urges her unfitness for the post, she is accordingly appointed (894. 20). Too often the Bridewell or House of Correction is as infirm as Widow Field. In 1721, only twenty-eight years from its foundation, it has to be described as 'ruinous, very decayed and out of repair, in so much that the prisoners and felons sent thither cannot safely be detained' (Herts Q.S. Order Book, Easter Sessions, 1721). In 1737 it is still more dilapidated by a band of 'strolers, travelling about telling fortunes and calling themselves Egyptians,' who were used to fresh air and resented being confined. The constable on that occasion took his duties seriously: 'Oct. 21, 22, 23 and 24. For 2 chains, 4 locks and mending 2 gunns to guard the prisoners, 2s.: For one pound of Powder and 2 pound of Shott, 1s. 5d.: For two men to guard 'em four nights, 8s.: For quartering the women, 8s.: For their eating and drinking at the Chequer and Ball, 8s.:

For a Supper for the Watch at the Rose and Crown, 6s. 8d.: Spent at Stevenage on the road going to Hertford, 4s.: Spent at Watton going to Hertford, 2s.: For 7 guardsmen to Hertford, 14s.' (895). On the 6th day of March, 1760, Oswell Odell ' broke and escaped from the House of Correction at Hitchin.' After being at large for three years he was recaptured, and for his heinous offence was fined 1s. Twelve years later, 1774, the House was rebuilt at the cost of £76.

This was the prison which John Howard inspected in 1776. ' It consists,' so he writes, ' of a room for men 20½ feet by 10½; and over it two rooms for women who go up to them by a ladder. No chimney in any of the rooms, no straw, no court, no water, no allowance, no employment ' (899. 213). Every year the Overseers, under compulsion, send a few shillings to relieve ' the poore prisoners of King's Bench and Marshalsea,' but they trouble little enough about the prisoners of Hitchin. For a long time after Howard's visit they have to be described in the annual report to Quarter Sessions as ' quite naked and lousy.' In 1789 the magistrates in Quarter Sessions assembled deputed the Rev. Anthony Hamill, D.D., the Rev. Henry Baker, Charles de Laet, William Baker and Adolphus Meetkerke to make an official inspection. Their report follows that of Howard pretty closely, but it gives some additional particulars: ' The building is brick, lined with wood. It has two small windows with shutters which are necessarily shut close every night to prevent the people in the yard giving the prisoners implements whereby to escape, which has frequently been done. The Necessary belonging to a very large workhouse adjoins the prison and is excessively offensive. The keeper whose salary is £24 a year maintains prisoners on an allowance of a pound of bread a day and water. He lives more than a quarter of a mile from the prison and only visits it once a day to let out the prisoners for necessary occasions. He declares that the stench arising from the Necessaries is so unwholesome that if prisoners are detained a fortnight they constantly sicken and generally die very soon ' (Herts Q.S. Minute Book, vol. 1783–1797).

XIV

At the close of their report the visiting magistrates had recommended that the Hitchin Prison should be used as infre-

quently as possible, and that even short-term prisoners should do their time at Hertford. For that suggestion our Hitchin felons owed them little thanks, for the Hertford Prison was, if anything, more foul than ours, and to escape from it was difficult indeed. Death was the only sure way out, and those were fortunate who died swift and soon. In 1734, Thomas Crawley of Hitchin fell with the Newgate fever, as it was termed, in Hertford Gaol, and died after lingering forty days. Most of his fellow-prisoners shared the happy release. Hundreds of other Hitchin men died of what was called ' the pining sickness,' which by a hollow sham the Coroner always attributed to ' divine visitation,' when it was obviously a mere matter of bad drains. The abject misery of incarceration comes out well in the petition of John Fisher, formerly of Hitchin, in 1738: ' Your poor petitioner sheweth that he 'as been in prison above 12 month, my wife being an evel woman and Desiering my Death, she 'as continually from Quarter Session to Quarter Session sworne the Peace against me which my long confinement must certainly be my Death if your Worships don't take itt into your consideration and give me some Relieve.' On this petition the Clerk of the Peace has endorsed ' Nothing done.' Twenty-two weeks later comes another pitiful petition. Fisher is ' in a perishing condition, and destitute of all the necessaries of lyfe.' He asks if he may be transported; anything rather than rot to death slowly in the county gaol (894. 18).

' Nothing done.' That is the constant burden also of the visiting justices' report. ' The cells are not whitewashed once a year as the regulations require.' 1789. ' There are no ventilators (xix); no separate room for the sick; no bathing tubs. The Act is not hung up in the gaol.' 1790. ' There is neither surgeon nor apothecary.' And always there is the complaint against ' the King's *goal*-keeper (*sic*),' as he is pleasantly called, that he does not play the game, or, in their own words, that he ' charges exhorbitant Garnish money and fees.' The few things that *are* done prove very unhelpful from the prisoners' point of view: ' 1771. For repairing pistolls and blunderbusses, 7s.: 1774. For new links to leg irons and keys to leg iron locks, 14s.: 1780. Ordered that shutters be put to the windows of the Goal Chapple to prevent them being broken: 1784. Ordered

xix. ' Proposals to ventilate Hertford Gaol ' had been formulated thirty years before, 1759.

that a door be added to the doorway between the 2 Felons wards to prevent the prisoners speaking through the same: 1785. Ordered that the Gaoler shall no longer sell intoxicating liquors to the prisoners but in lieu of his profits therefrom shall be granted an additional salary of £20 a quarter: 1787. To planks, iron Bars etc., to make good the Hole in the wall where the prisoners broak threw, £1 9s. 7d.: To work round the top of the wall in the yard with iron spikes and branches to prevent them getting over, £12 8s. 6d.: To layin an oak plank floor to prevent their getting under the foundation of the wall, £6 3s. 3d.: 1788. Ordered that the top of the well shall be covered more securely than before,' to prevent the more desperate prisoners committing suicide (894. 18–27).

One must be fair to the authorities. They did occasionally do works of mercy. In 1774, for example, ' on account of the distemper now in gaol it is dangerous for Mr. Scott the Chaplain to do his duty there, and it is ordered that his duty be dispensed with till the next Assizes ' (894. 28). It was something to be rid of him for a season, for he was always urging the salutary effects of solitary confinement in the single cell (xx), and in chapel he was always rubbing it in from his favourite text, ' The wages of sin is death.' Then, too, in 1780 it is ' Ordered that the Cess Pools of the gaol be removed so as to prevent their draining into the well as they now do ' (894. 32). By the seventeen-nineties an apothecary is established, with a well-chosen stock of rhubarb, hysteric drops, fever powders, vomiting powders, anodyne draughts, balsamic electuaries, gargarisms and worm-wood. Those poor wretches who were too far gone for medicine to recover were given a draught of beer or wine to dull the last agonies. There was bread and cheese at the burying, and a gallon of beer apiece for the coroner's jurymen.

Undoubtedly John Fisher was right to give the preference to transportation, though that was hardly the paradise that Lord

xx. Most chaplains were agreed about this, and for a reason that comes out at the end of the report of H. Demain, Chaplain of Hertford Gaol in 1843: ' I have no reason,' he says, ' to change my oft repeated and recorded opinion of the efficacy of the Separate system. Its value with respect to moral training, I think, is very considerable, and I have not noticed any detrimental physical or mental effects. I believe it is only one of the prejudices of the day to stigmatize it as baneful and inhuman, but only I believe by those who have had no practical experience of its working. I have noticed a more earnest and interested attention to my ministerial exhortations as well in cells as in chapel ' (894. 46).

Ellenborough claimed, 'a summer airing by an easy migration to a milder climate.' At least there was fresh air, a chance to make good, and the society of men of spirit of whom the little world of England was not worthy. It has been bravely said that 'the village Hampdens of that generation sleep by the shores of Botany Bay.' Whenever the wars put a stop to transportation the authorities got rid of something like a thousand criminals a year by that temporary expedient of the 'hulks,' which was continued for eighty years: '1783. Paid for conveying prisoners to the Marine Society, £6 4s.: 1799. Paid for transports to the hulks near Portsmouth, £21 4s. 0d.' Well might those Hitchin men abandon hope who entered there. 'Of all the places of confinement that British history records,' write Sidney and Beatrice Webb, 'the hulks were the most brutalizing, the most demoralizing, and the most horrible. The death-rate was appalling even for the prisons of the period' (xxi).

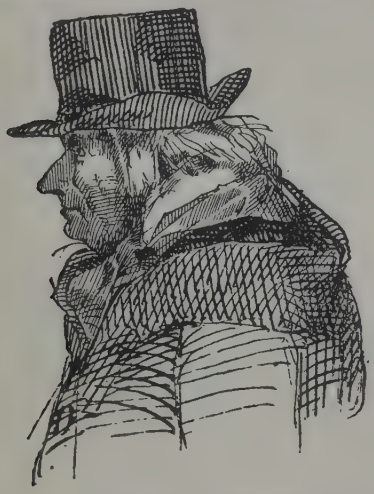
XV

Now let us transport ourselves back to Hitchin and observe the criminal propensities of the later Georgian period. We may notice at the outset what an abundance of material there is. Through our records, at least, one seems to look out upon a crowded world of rogues, busying themselves with breaking every letter of the Decalogue, and not even overlooking those sins of omission which a child once happily defined as 'the sins a man ought to have committed but didn't.' One notices also a lack of respect for the law. The voice of the constable is not so loud in the streets. The surly citizen no longer touches his forelock as His Worship, 'in fair round belly with good capon lined,' waddles by. Men have been reading Paine and Godwin in the taverns. They know what their own class has managed to do over in France. When they are primed they can quote whole passages out of *The Rights of Man*. In a word, Jack is as good as his master.

You can trace the growing disrespect both in Petty Sessions and outside. There have to be more and more commitments of such as 'behave insolently and saucily at petty sessions.' At the back of the stuffy court one can hear the scum of the town

xxi. *English Prisons under Local Government*, 1922, pp. 45–46.

slandering those magistrates 'who come straight from receiving the Sacrament and from taking the oath against Transubstantiation to browbeat innocent men.' One catches them sneering at the Big-Wig on the Bench as he mutters over to the prisoner an inaccurate version of what he thought he heard the learned Clerk whisper to him. One asks oneself in dismay whether the breed of magistrates is what it was. When Charles Rumball of Hitchin is summoned in 1785, he has the impudence to send word to the court that 'he is under an engagement to go to Baldock Fair.' And yet no warrant issues! Those defendants who condescend to appear are quite ready to bandy words with the



A HITCHIN MAGISTRATE

Bench and abuse the witnesses; or, as the Clerk more politely puts it, 'they interchange contumelious words.' Now and again you meet with a prisoner of the old school as obsequious as any Justice of the Peace could wish. 'I am very sorry that I should give you any trouble on my account,' says John Hobbs in 1768; 'I truly repent of what I have done and, as there's grace in store for repenting sinners, I make no doubt of finding mercy from you.' And so he did (894. 31). 'I do not wish to add insult to crime,' says Richard Palmer in 1842, 'by denying the truth of the statement of the witnesses. I acknowledge being guilty of the whole I am charged with' (894. 45). He and

Hobbs were two in a thousand. Generally there was a total denial, accompanied with oaths and curses.

In the year 1787, however, an awful visitation befell a man who was committing perjury at Hitchin. He was swearing before a magistrate that he had been robbed by a gentleman who was well known and respected in the parish. The magistrate, who was better informed, warned him that he was committing perjury, but the miscreant stood to it, and called God to witness that, if what he had advanced was not true, he wished that his jaws might be locked and his flesh rot on his bones. 'Shocking to relate,' notes William Lucas in his diary, 'his jaws were instantly arrested and, after lingering nearly a fortnight in great anguish, he expired in horrible agonies, his flesh literally rotting on his bones' (24).

Outside the Court, as one might imagine, the law was more openly manhandled and abused. Here is a typical example. It is the year 1787. Thomas Marshall of Hitchin, hot and flushed with the effort of giving evidence against John Everett, goes round to the Red Hart to have a drink. After a while the door opens and Everett comes in. The rest may be told in the words of the complainant. 'He did there and then threaten to do for me and my Character, concluding with Horrid Oaths, and violently wrenching a stick from me did fling the same at me and spit in my face. Also, seizing a chair which stood in the Bar of the Red Hart Inn, he with great violence threw the same at me, which narrowly missed doing me a Mischief' (894. 33). Here is a second example. It is the year 1808. The coach, with the Rev. Thomas Bargus inside it, is passing down the street. Suddenly the parson's head bobs out of the window. He has heard a man using obscene language on the King's highway, and feels it his duty to order the driver to stop so that he may take the man's name and reprove him for his conduct. 'Who are you?' roars out the offender, John Kirby. 'A magistrate for the county of Hertford,' comes the stiff reply. 'Then damn your soul to Hell,' replies Kirby, 'we don't want any calves' heads here.' With that the coach moves on, and the rest of Kirby's language is drowned in the clatter of the horses and the rumble of the wheels (72. 2. 215).

And here is the third example. It is the year 1816. James Floyd is carting Edward Glazebrook and James Brinkley, two rogues and vagabonds, from Hitchin to Hertford Prison. Follow-

THE RED HART GATEWAY

From a painting by William H. Thorp, 1925

ing hard after them comes William Shaw, a friend of the aforesaid rogues. He has a heavy bludgeon in his hand. As he comes alongside the cart, he brandishes his weapon at Floyd and proposes to cut his ' bloody head ' off. Whilst Floyd's attention is thus distracted, Glazebrook leaps out of the cart and pulls out a knife which he has secreted in his clothes. Floyd leaps after him and succeeds in taking hold of his arm, but Glazebrook, ' attempting with his knife to cut his arm off,' gets away (894. 40).

XVI

Contempt of authority. That is the first thing one remarks about this later Georgian era. The second is the decline in the ' art and mystery ' of those who followed the criminal profession. Whereas aforetime their deeds were done *impetuose*, or on the inspiration of Bacchus, or out of pure bedevilment without hope of reward, now they are become basely utilitarian. In motive, in skill, in taste the standards have gone down. Occasionally one is gratified to see some artistic sensibility at work. In 1808 Harriet Tyler of Hitchin risks everything to be able to wear ' a pair of silk stockings.' One who is the son of a Churchwarden, and the grandson of a Rector, risks his respectable soul to own ' a silver snuff-box.' Priscilla Dauban, in 1829, displays the unerring taste she inherits from her ancestors in France by ' collecting ' a yellow silk handkerchief, an embroidered apron and some cambric muslin. John Brown, 1832, supplies himself with ' 2 books of common prayer.' William Webb, 1839, out of the pure love of music, acquires ' 2 flutes a Flageolet and a music stand, the property of one Charles Times ' (894. 44–8).

But for the most part ' their God was their belly '; or shall we say more charitably that they stole because they starved? If we may trust the figures of Hilaire Belloc ' no less than 93 per cent. of criminals suffer from metagrobolization of the hyperdromedaries, which is scientist Greek for the consequences of not having enough to eat.' However that may be, it is safe to say that here at Hitchin between 1780 and 1830 half the population was hungry and had not wherewithal to eat. Can you do other than pity those famine-stricken people who turned thieves at the sight of ' some pickle-pork and three pints of ale,' or ' 2 lbs. of meat called mutton,' or ' 5 cakes of gingerbread '? When the quartern loaf rose to 1s. 5d. in 1795, can you wonder at that

'great concourse of people in the market-place and parading the streets, insisting that the price of bread be lowered'; or at William Warner and others 'assembling together and threatening if their wages were not increased they would demolish the houses' of those who employed them at such cruel rates (894. 36)?

The pity of it was that when these starvelings stole they never knew when to stop. That is why so many lingered over their plunder and were caught. For example, Robert Thorogood, who went out to steal some beer in 1775, was not content with a quart, but would take 'a pail of it.' No wonder his speech and his steps betrayed him! Again, in 1817, a sailor broke into the house of William Wilshere and, for his own use on leave, appropriated a hat and a quantity of handkerchiefs and gloves which he concealed in the crown of the said hat. As he was walking off with the hat upon his head, he caught sight of another hat in the hall, and seized that also—a piece of folly which was bound to give him away. Even a slow-witted Headborough could tell that something was amiss when he saw a sailor lurching down the street with one pot-hat perched upon his curly head and another held furtively in his free hand. There was a chase up Pound Lane into the Bedford Road, and five miles along the straight to Henlow, where the gallant seaman, making heavy weather of it and carrying too much in the top-gallants, hove to and surrendered at discretion (894. 41).

For a third example we will bring up Edwin Pateman and William Shepherd of Hitchin, who shortly before Christmas, 1832, resolved to feast themselves at the expense of a rich fishmonger, William Burrell. His shop, which they rifled whilst he was revelling at the Swan, yielded 'half a barrel of herrings, 2 bushels of apples, and 1 bushel of oysters.' About midnight they took the best of these to a barn in Hollow Lane and then began the feast. But no sooner were they seated than they discovered John Sanders waking up from a drunken sleep close beside them on the straw. 'If you say anything in the morning,' they threatened, 'we'll kill you.' They then proceeded with their banquet. Afterwards, as they came out, another loafer hiding in the straw overheard them say, 'Those were dam good herrings.' A little caution, a sharing of the spoil, and they would not have spent an unpeaceful Christmas of ill will in the House of Correction (894. 43).

XVII

Another well-known feature of the late Georgian period is the severity and inequality of the punishments inflicted. It is as though the magistrates were striving to recover their diminished authority by a reign of terror (xxii). Think of it! Three years' ballast-heaving 'for stealing a pair of braces,' and seven years' transportation 'for stealing a pair of worsted stockings.' Does it not make one mourn for 'man's inhumanity to man'? Down at West Mill, Whittingstall is profiteering to the extent of £50,000 out of the wars with France; yet he is mean enough to prosecute one of his labourers for taking a few beans. Jane Child, grocer of Bucklersbury, Hitchin, 1774, is doing a roaring trade. Elizabeth, the wife of John Parr, comes into the shop and calls for an ounce of nutmegs. Whilst the grocer is packing these Elizabeth picks up a few more and slips them into her pocket; does it clumsily and is detected. She 'offers the said Jane Child £5 or a set of china not to prosecute.' But Jane is obdurate. The constable is sent for. The law is invoked. 'The sentence is that you be publicly whipped next Saturday and imprisoned in Bridewell three months to hard labour' (72. 2. 129, 133).

Property, as you see, is savagely protected, but what little account is paid to offences against the body in that rough-and-tumble age! As for a woman's honour, why that is a mere feather in the scales of justice. *De minimis non curat lex.* You can tell the value set upon it by its order in the composite indictments: e.g. 'for robbing Sarah Whitless of 1½d., a pair of pumps,' and, as it were thrown in, 'committing a rape on her.' You can tell it even better by those two cases which stand, one beneath the other, on the Roll for 1770: 'Indictment of Samuel Harris for attempting to ravish Sarah Hilyard against her will. Pleaded guilty and fined 6s. 8d. Indictment of John Lee for stealing a waggoner's whip, value one shilling, in Hitchin market. Ordered to be transported for seven years' (72. 2. 116).

Against these stony-hearted sentences you must set the fact that so many criminals went free. Nor is that surprising. With no hue and cry as of old, and no detective service as at present,

xxii. Professor Holdsworth notes: 'The severity you speak of was largely due to the defective police system. A nation cursed with a weak government will begin to fear its criminals; and fear, as Gardiner has said, is the parent of cruelty.' See Holdsworth, *op. cit.*, v. 196, and Blackstone's *Commentaries*, iv. 10, 18, 239.

offences inevitably passed into the limbo of ' undivulged crimes, unwhipped of justice,' felonies unfathomed and murder mysteries. Look at that lank and leaden-eyed man, with his hat ' bangled ' or slouched over his head. Do you see how his face is marred by the smallpox and ' sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought '? And do you see that clutch of vellum-clad books under his arm? Now he turns into Golden Square and enters the Church School, where in this year of grace 1750 he is an usher. No one knows anything about him, where he came from or who his people were; but they say he is a profound scholar, poring long past midnight over his tomes of Celtic, Hebrew, Latin and Greek. The other masters speak almost with awe of that Comparative Lexicon of all European tongues which he is said to be compiling.

Who would guess that this man of letters had any guilty secret lurking in his breast? Yet why the massive lock to his bedroom door and the massive bar of iron framed across it from inside, still visible to this day? Away from his books he seems not the least of a pedant. There is a smile for any ragamuffin he encounters in the street, and as for animals, especially wild animals, he seems to worship them (xxiii). It is true he goes solitary, and walks by unfrequented ways. But, meet him where you may, in Wain Wood or out on Mardley Heath or Wilbury Hills, how happily absorbed he is in his botanical or geological pursuits! Are these the traits of a murderer?

Look at him again. He is doing his duty and sitting with his boys in St. Mary's Church. The Rev. Pilkington Morgan, Master of Arts and Vicar of Hitchin, is in the pulpit. He is preaching a course of sermons on Divine Retribution. His text this time is taken from the words, ' For we trust we have a good conscience.' Last Sunday it was, ' How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.' The Sunday before that it was, ' The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.' Do you hear what he is saying: ' Let us examine to see if there be any way of wickedness in us. . . . It is for want of calling themselves to a strict account for their actions that very wicked men seem as secure and easy to themselves as if their conscience was well with them and they

xxiii. ' I used to observe him,' says the Rev. Anthony Hinton, ' when he was walking with me in the Botanic Gardens in Chelsea. Frequently he would stoop down and carefully remove a snail or a worm out of the path to prevent their being destroyed. Was he perhaps hoping to atone for the murder he had perpetrated by showing mercy to every animal? '

THE CHURCH HOUSE: GARDEN VIEW

From a photograph by Harry Meyer, 1929

had nothing to dread. . . . Yet it is a false and delusive peace of mind which will fail them when they stand in the most need of it at the hour of death and in the day of judgment' (900. 1. 131–177). Surely, if this man's conscience really smote him, he would stand up in the face of the congregation and confess his sins!

> 'How could he share in childish prayer
> Or join in Evening Hymn?'

His countenance betrays nothing; it is as calm as those of the boys beside him; yet this man, if you have not already guessed it, is Eugene Aram (xxiv).

And here is another mystery that remains a mystery unto this day. It is February 1800, a year of war and rumours of war, of revolutions and rumours of revolution; a time of dearth and discontent, when the least spark of sedition might set the whole of England aflame. It is 'past twelve o'clock and a foul night.' Old Granter, the town constable, stumbles for a last look into the cobbled Market Place, blinks about him by the feeble light of his lanthorn, and 'so to bed.' *Omnibus Benae!* The landlord of the Swan as he shuts his casement thinks that he sees someone slinking across the square, and hears a suspicious tapping on the Bell House; but it is too late to go downstairs and, anyway, it is no affair of his. In the morning, however, it was everyone's affair. Tom, Dick, and Harry,

xxiv. No one, I think, has ever traced Aram's itinerary from Knaresborough to the gallows. Was it conscience, which makes cowards of us all, or his wandering scholar's spirit, which drove him on from one school to another until that dread morning of August 19, 1758, when, as usher of a school at King's Lynn, he was arrested. The rest of the story everybody knows, down to the ghastly description of his wife as she picks up the bones that fall one after another from the gibbet, and of his children who pick up a penny or two showing strangers where their father's body was hanged in chains. It is a pity that Aram has left so few traces of his residence at Hitchin. The entries in our manuscript diaries and histories are 'brief and curst,' as though the writers were ashamed of the connection. But some evidently could have said things 'an they would.' Theodore Lucas, who died in his ninetieth year in 1927, told me that Bulwer Lytton, hearing of the Aram and Hitchin association, came here in 1830 to gather material for the writing of his novel, and that William Lucas was able to furnish him with many particulars that had come first-hand from his grandfather. Probably, however, the novelist's apotheosis of the murderer is all his own. John Ransom had been a pupil at Church House in Eugene Aram's time, but he could never be brought to speak of him. When I first came to Hitchin in 1901 the narrow passage from the churchyard into High Street was still being called Aram's Alley by old people, and I knew one woman who would never go that way because, she said, it was haunted by Aram's ghost.

constable, churchwarden, and squire, are all elbowing one another to get nearer to the inflammatory handbill which someone had nailed up in the night: 'ADVICE TO ALL POOR TRADESMEN AND LABOURERS. With one consent lay asside and meet together in a Body and see whats to be Don in this Case, for your work, all you can Doe, will not support you and your famelly. Your vile oppressors see how they use ye, what yoke of bondage you are brought under; be not afraid of horse nor standing Arms [this is a cut at the Hitchin Volunteers] but come forth with Courage and Resolution. If you give way to those Villins you will always be bound under their chaigns wherein your liberty and Freedom is intirely lost. Nothings to be done without you take this step. Some may pertend to smoth and calm you, for Hares our Soupmaker may come with Doctrine of fine speeches, as keeping a clean house and the wife to give a smile; send him to where he came from. When whe whant him we will send for him. If nothing better can be Don than allready is, I'd wish every man to leave his famelly and let the damned Heathen Doe as they will, for why should whe starve in a land where theres Plenty. Neverthemore, as a well wisher GOD BLESS THE KING!'

Whose handwriting is it, and whose is the misspelling? When is the massacre to be? Will all the magistrates and employers of labour and shopkeepers and clergy and income-tax officers, their wives and their children, be murdered in their beds? These are the questions that tremble on everybody's lips. To make a show of confidence the authorities call up the special constables and the Loyal Volunteers. Rewards are placarded about the town in the names of the Vicar and Churchwardens, in that of William Wilshere, as Captain of the Hitchin Loyal Volunteers, in that of His Majesty, King George III. But no one comes forward or turns King's evidence. No one discovers, and no one will ever discover, the lost leader of the Hitchin Revolution.

XVIII

A few months later two bodies were brought to light on Windmill Hill, buried face downwards and only three feet deep (15). Here was another mystery. Were these the first victims of 'the hidden hand,' or had they something to do with the bank-notes of considerable value which were found concealed on the same hill not long before? Once again the magistrates took counsel

HITCHIN STRAW-PLAIT MARKET

From a photograph by T. B. Latchmore, 1865

together, and as usual came to no conclusion. In 1818, however, the town itself took counsel together in Vestry assembled. Some trenchant words were uttered about the evil reputation of the parish and the slackness of the constables: 'It appearing to this vestry that there is a great deal of disorderly and immoral practices in the Streets of this Town in the evening, Ordered that the Constables and Headboroughs be directed to apprehend and hale before a magistrate all disorderly persons to be dealt with according to law.' This was all very well, as the Headboroughs pointed out, but what about the Folly (xxv) and what about Hollow Lane and Dead Street, which were known as the St. Giles of Hitchin? For years no constable had dared to show his face in that quarter of the town. The King's writ did not run there, nor any magistrate's summons. It was, as Cobbett used to say, 'a very rascally spot of earth.' The Vestry, however, was bent upon carrying out its resolution. If these yards and courts and slums were the breeding-place of thieves and the sanctuary of murderers, all the more reason why the stronghold should be stormed. Every day, so it was decreed, the constables armed with sword-sticks were to walk up and down this den of iniquity (xxvi); and every night as many as nine special constables (xxvii), marching together and armed with staves, were to quell disorder and keep the peace. To make room for the felons they arrested, the Bridewell was to be rebuilt, and the walls surrounding it made twelve feet high.

It was an excellent plan of campaign, vigorously carried out and successful beyond expectation. By the time the next Vestry came round Dead Street was like a city of the dead, and Hollow Lane echoed only with the tramp of armed men. After six stifling and memorable months the Petty Sessions sank once more into insignificance, and the empty Bridewell with its towering wall seemed to respectable ratepayers a gigantic folly. Hitchin had 'purged its conscience from dead works,' and become a decent, God-fearing and law-abiding town.

xxv. A Hitchin magistrate who proposed to build a Mission Hall for the Folly in 1848 informed the Bishop that the inhabitants of that district 'are living as heathen, unbaptized and unmarried.'

xxvi. One of the sword-sticks they used can be seen in Letchworth Museum, Exhibit No. 1735.

xxvii. In 1815, at a Special Sessions held in William Wilshere's house, as many as eighty special constables had been sworn in. Their expenses were, for the most part, met by private subscription. William Lucas in his accounts puts down, 'To Cash subscribed towards an added nightly watch, £1 1s. 0d.'

There have been sporadic outbreaks since then, of course, for sudden conversions make for sudden lapses. But there is an air of social or political necessity about Victorian crime which takes much of its viciousness away. Those who were caught body-snatching here at St. Mary's in the twenties were not thinking of committing sacrilege. They were in dire want of the £9 which the better sort of corpses brought (xxviii). Those horny-handed wielders of the flail who broke up the threshing-machines in the forties did so from a blind instinct of self-preservation; they felt that one or the other—the man or the machine—had to be destroyed. Those women who stole the links of 'broad twist plait' in the fifties did so because their husbands were out of work and their children were clamouring for bread.

Again, there is a corresponding air of clemency, or the beginnings of clemency, in the punishments of this more enlightened period. For some years public opinion had been hardening against the capital penalty—so wantonly inflicted (xxix). When the common gallows of the county fell down from old age and hard use in 1794, it was 'ordered that a new movable gallows be made for the use of the county, to be put up and used from time to time as may be necessary' (Herts Q.S.O.B., March 1). That brought the question nearer home. An execution at Hertford had been a public spectacle; there was something impersonal about it. The culprit belonged only to the law. But to watch one's fellow-townsman being tossed into eternity by his cottage door and with his children looking on made many a man shudder and many a neighbour weep. You can tell what passed through the mind of Isaac Clark of Hitchin in 1817 as he looked at them hanging young William Moles, aged only seventeen, for setting some stacks on fire; he wrote it down afterwards and printed it in the town: *Clemens and Severus, or Considerations on the Policy*

xxviii. Before the churchyard was enclosed in 1827 the special constables sat up many a night in the church porch waiting for these body-snatchers. W. C. Carter used to speak to me with some pride of his grandfather, who, when one of these desecrators gave him the slip, pursued him in the half-light through the town, overtook him three miles out in Hitch Wood, bound him, lifted him into a dog-cart, and brought him back in triumph to the Bridewell. The family still preserves the certificate of discharge 'from all and all manner of parish or ward offices within the parish of Hitchin,' which he received in consequence under 10 William III, c. 12. These certificates, or 'Tyburn Tickets' as they came to be called, were assignable, and rich men, wishing to avoid onerous duties, would give as much as £30 for one.

xxix. In 1811 William Lucas gives 'cash to a Society for diffusion of knowledge respecting the punishment of death, £2 2s. 0d.' (686).

THE IDLE APPRENTICE EXECUTED AT TYBURN

and Reasonableness of Capital Punishments. But it was the indecency and not the cruelty of it that infuriated him: 'So far from the solemnity of such spectacles having any lasting effect upon the minds of the vulgar, their conduct on such occasions has ere the close of the day exhibited disgraceful scenes of riot and intemperance; men and women have been seen talking and laughing and children playing when collected to witness these awful spectacles.' It is just one more testimony to the truth of Hogarth's famous drawing, which fronts this page.

XIX

Slowly—how slowly!—came the statutes which repealed the extreme penalty for trivial offences; but on this errand of mercy the judges outran the law. It was still, in the twenties, a 'high misdemeanour to take a mutton'; but sheep-stealers were not so inevitably condemned to swing. So with the magistrates in Petty Sessions. They also began to see that their office was remedial as well as punitive, that they ought to show some pity in the name of justice. 'Tis small as a wren's eye as yet, but it is there, a faint, far-off perception of the psychology of crime. It leads some of them to found a Juvenile Delinquent Society as an early experiment in Probation; others to turn a compassionate, blind eye upon the failings of adults. 'The late warm weather,' writes one of our magistrates to the Clerk of the Peace in extenuation of a long calendar, 'has had an effect upon some of my neighbours.' That friendly attempt at understanding would have been impossible to 'the sad-eyed Justice with his surly hum' of the century before. So would their new way of dealing with the 'divers unhappy differences' between man and wife. When John Chambers came before them, charged with 'being a marriaged man and absenting himself from his family,' they declined to send him to prison (how could that possibly help?), but found the prodigal work, and kept him to it, until he came to his senses (xxx) (894. 38).

It was this humanitarian instinct that led to the abolition of some brutal forms of punishment. After 1817 no more women

xxx. Their chivalrous interventions on behalf of wronged or forsaken wives led to their being pestered beyond endurance. Here is a letter which a Hitchin magistrate received in 1851: 'I hear you are so kind to Ladies who don't like their Husbands. I have such a bad one. He takes all my fortune, about £500 a year, and gives me but £40. Do protect me and take me under your roof.'

were ' publicly flogged until their backs be bloody ' (59 Geo. III, c. 90). The last man to be publicly whipped was Richard Hill, convicted that same year ' for stealing eight pairs of cotton web braces.' A little while and the stocks also were to go. They served some little purpose for drunks and disorderlies, who, after their night out, spent a day in ' the broad noon of public scorn.' But they were coming to be regarded as mere laughing-stocks. You can tell that from the comic-cuts of the fifties, in which the captive is seen amusing himself with a fiddle, and a pot-boy approaching with a foaming mug of ale. Once upon a time there stood a board above our stocks with this couplet painted upon it:—

' He that his God doth feare
Will not come here.'

That was a maxim far too good to last. One Gunpowder Treason night it was hoisted alongside the effigy of Guy Fawkes in the Market Square, and so, pointing its moral to the last, it perished like a martyr in the flames. The stocks themselves did not long survive. By 1855 they were upon their last legs. William Maylin of Walsworth Hamlet in Hitchin, who lived to be a hundred, ' remembered a man with a wooden leg, called Armstrong, who was put in the stocks; and he wriggled and wriggled till he finally slipped out, leaving his wooden leg behind.' It came in useful, with what was left of the stocks, on the following 5th of November.

Whipping-posts, ducking-stools, stocks—one after another these relics of barbarism fell. Only the Bridewell remained, and that in spite of petitions of the townsmen and recommendations of the magistrates for its removal. Now and again it served a turn. As late as 1874 the Hitchin Bench sentenced a man for three months for stealing one herring. But the Keeper's office was almost a sinecure. He had, indeed, a dangerous amount of time upon his hands. On Saturday night, the 1st of December, 1838, Keeper Benjamin Batten was observed in the beerhouse of Squire Day of Hitchin long past midnight and well into Sunday morning, drinking and playing cards in company with other men, including two apprentices under twenty years of age. ' It is the opinion of the Justices that the said Benjamin Batten's conduct is highly unbecoming a person holding his office and disqualifies him from executing the duties of it. They therefore beg leave to submit the propriety of his removal to the consideration of the magistrates at Quarter Sessions ' (72. 2. 393).

Batten's successor had the same easygoing nature, but he had more sense. He knew just where he ought to be, and he knew, even better, where he ought not to be. On one occasion he was seen hurrying away from Butts Close, where a parish riot was in progress. 'What's the matter?' asked one who met him. 'Oh, nothing,' replied the constable, 'only a fight going on over there.' 'But surely,' urged the other, 'it's your duty to try and stop it?' 'Not a bit,' exclaimed the constable, 'let 'em fight, I say, let 'em all fight. It will get rid of some of their bad blood.'

ARMSTRONG

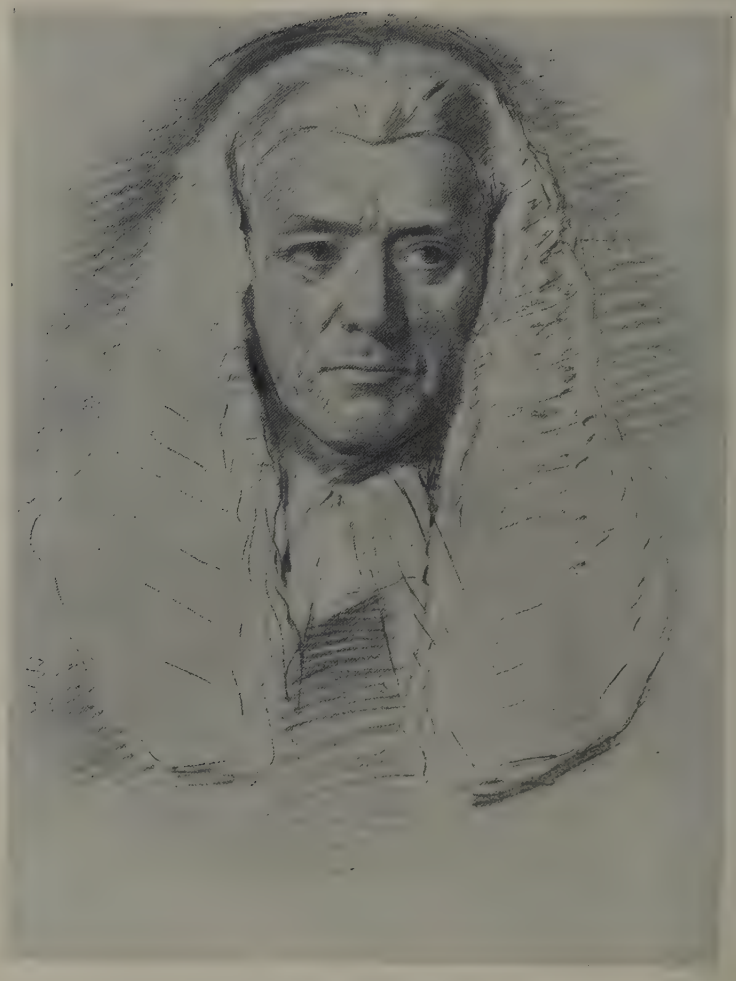
Some wooden-headed constables had not the same tact in 'making themselves to be absent'; but they could easily be tricked. One remembers in this connection a fine feat of arms accomplished by the Herts Yeomanry when they mustered at Hitchin in 1856. Cumbering the Market Place at that time there were two ancient and ill-conditioned houses belonging to the parish of Tewin, which the overseers of that parish refused on any terms to sell. The townspeople grew impatient, but were at a loss to know how to proceed. In that nick of time the O.C. of the Yeomanry appeared upon the scene. After a brief reconnoitre, his clear-cut, military mind was made up. 'And you have endured these shambles all this time,' he exclaimed, 'go and fetch me some

ropes.' 'But what about the police?' some timorous citizen inquired. 'You can leave them to me,' he said. Whereupon he dispatched his corporal to the police station to say that there was a disturbance at the Moorhen and a serious accident at the railway station, both of which needed their immediate attention. The coast being clear, ropes were then attached to the half-timbers and chimney-stacks of the rickety old shanties; the townsmen pulled with a will; the Yeomanry pulled with a weight; 'Pull, you lazy devils,' roared the Captain. Something sighed, something moaned; and then, with a loud cry the ancient buildings yielded up the ghost. Amidst the cheers of the populace—cheers that reached the bewildered policemen at the Moorhen and at the railway station—the lifeless tenements fell, and great was the fall thereof.

As Charles Paternoster came out of his shop the next morning to survey the scene the Squire of Ickleford rode into the square. 'What *have* you been doing?' he inquired. Paternoster shook his head. 'We are a quiet people, sir,' he said, 'we live in a quiet town, and are not used to such doings as took place here last night. They called it the taking of Sebastopol, sir.'

XX

This was one of the last crimes we committed in the grand manner. Before long the moral energy of Victorian statesmen began to hedge the whole of life about with pains and penalties, until 'the truly free Englishman,' as Sydney Smith complained, 'walked about covered with licences.' Why won't our grandmother, the State, leave us innocent children alone? It is just the same protest that old Burton raised in the seventeenth century against King James's Council: '*Ut olim flagitiis, sic nunc legibus laboramus*—as in times past we were sicke of offences so now are we of lawes.' They do not give any criminal a sporting chance; and as for understanding them, it is beyond the wits of those who make them and those who administer them. In his early, unregenerate days at Hitchin, Henry Hawkins, better known afterwards as *Sir* Henry or Lord Brampton, used to quote Goethe in his own defence: 'If a man set out to study all the laws, he will have no time left to transgress them.' Hawkins certainly found time, and though he scandalized the town and alienated his father, he gained a first-hand knowledge of human depravity



MR. JUSTICE HAWKINS

From a painting by George Richmond, R.A., 1877

that was to stand him in good stead when he became a judge (xxxi). In 1850 a letter was received by the *Herts Mercury*, dated from the residence of John Hawkins of Hitchin and signed in his well-known hand. It announced the sudden and lamentable death of John Curling, Chairman of the Hitchin Bench. The editor accordingly inserted a solemn obituary notice in the next issue of his paper. Four days later he was astounded to hear that Curling was presiding as usual at the Hitchin Petty Sessions. 'We have been compelled,' he writes the following week, 'to reject all announcements of births, marriages and deaths coming from Hitchin unless authenticated by some person known to us. Our only protection against these forgeries is to refuse all communications which do not come through our agents, Messrs. Paternoster.'

Henry Hawkins, who committed that 'outrage on decency,' was perhaps our last creative artist. You find no taint of personal advantage in anything he sets his hand to do. Merely the delight of planning, with almost diabolical ingenuity and immunity, something that would shock his respectable neighbours out of their torpor and self-complacency. The others, in comparison with him, are but the creatures of their age. One must admire the inventiveness of that indignant spirit who, weary of the usual obscenities, called his neighbour 'an impudent, incestuous, epicurial Atheist.' As a mouth-filling expletive, that was not dear at half a crown and costs. But, after all, it is only education beginning to make itself felt. Again, one observes the case of a clergyman who travelled to Hitchin in 1851 in order to take the Sunday services at Ickleford. He was fined £5 and costs by the Hitchin magistrates for riding in a first-class carriage with a second-class ticket, and for assaulting the constable who found it out (894. 42). That is just one more illustration of what the historians are now agreed to call the Railway Era (xxxii).

xxxi. Some of his local escapades will appear under the life of John Hawkins in the companion volume of *Hitchin Worthies*. I have an especial regard for Henry Hawkins as I work as a solicitor in the room he once occupied in his father's office, and I use reports which belonged to him and which bear his book-plate still. It is unfortunate that *The Reminiscences of Sir Henry Hawkins* by Richard Harris, K.C., published in 1904, should give so few particulars of his wild but very entertaining youth, and such an insufficient record of his real ability as a learned judge.

xxxii. Francis Lucas describes another: 'Ward Asplin of Bucklersbury was sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour for acting as best man at the marriage of the bigamist Wilcox with Richard Hull's niece. Wilcox

It was the intention of the author to carry his catalogue of crime up to the present day, for after twenty years' attendance at the Hitchin Bench, as the Clerk of the Clerk of the Justices, he is peculiarly well fitted to expose the frailties of his fellow townsmen. But the prudent publisher has entreated him to forgo these risky modern allusions, citing the authority of Sir Walter Raleigh that 'whosoever in writing a History shall follow Truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth.' It is a pity, for it means that the list, prepared by the author, of those people in his parish who are 'deserving to be hanged' must be left in the obscurity of manuscript.

Nor even, at the end of this long chapter, can any moral be drawn. It was a famous saying of Dr. William Gordon, one of our Hitchin historians, that 'the Instructions that events afford are the Soul of history.' But we cannot linger to point the lesson of these evil doings: their inevitable issues, the doubtful gain of pleasure, the certain loss of soul. They must speak for themselves, and make their own monitions. 'If these do not move us,' as Wesley used to say, 'we are asleep in the Devil's arms.'

was overtaken at the Hitchin station in the afternoon of his wedding-day just as the train which was to carry him and his bride was about to start. He was found to be very much intoxicated. Was sentenced for seven years' (966. 192).

THE MORALIST

DEATH-BED SCENE: OBSERVE THE LAWYER MAKING THE WILL

From an engraving by Crispin de Passe

WILLS AND TESTAMENTS (i)

I

T used to be said by John Skynner of Hitchin, who in 1591 founded the firm of solicitors which passed through the Drapers, Tristrams, Wilsheres and Eades into the hands of Messrs. Hawkins & Co., that nowhere does the character of a man come out more conspicuously than in the making of his will. Not only have you the distribution of his worldly goods: his personal and household stuff, his tools and stock-in-trade, his lands and tenements, but, especially in the earlier wills, the delineation of the man himself: his statement of belief, his pride and prejudice, his remorse and the recompense he pays, all summed up with that intensity of vision which comes to a man who is about to die. We may allow Skynner to give his opinion on this matter; for he was in practice seventy years. I who am a humble conveyancer in his firm and have drawn, and served as an executor for, so many Hitchin wills may be allowed to concur in that most just opinion. Moreover, it is one which as an historian also I share with my more learned brethren. Listen to what Professor Skeel says in her treatise on *Medieval Wills:* 'Their interest is manifold. They bring us into close touch with the men and women of the past. They appeal to the genealogist, who finds in them information that is often not procurable elsewhere. They supply information to the ecclesiastical historian, the economic and social historian, the antiquarian, the topographer, the philologist. There is hardly a side of medieval life that cannot be illustrated by wills' (*History*, vol. x, pp. 300–310).

Now let us examine the Hitchin wills, of which some hundreds survive amongst the papers of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon at Somerset House and

i. I have to thank Canon C. W. Foster, F.S.A., editor *inter alia* of *Lincoln Wills 1271–1530*, and Dr. Eileen Power for acting as 'executors, overseers and supervisors' to the following pages. Also the officials at the Literary Search Department, Somerset House, and those at the Peterborough Probate Registry for valuable assistance.

in the Probate Registry of Peterborough (ii); and we shall see for ourselves how far they justify the high opinions we have cited. First and foremost—for we shall do wisely to follow the traditional order of will-making—there comes the testator's recital of his bodily condition, his testamentary capacity, and the reason for the making of his will. This was thought important; for, as that great lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, observed, 'few men pinched with the messengers of death have a disposing memory'; and disappointed legatees are always willing to bring charges of undue influence against those who have been preferred. Thus Ralph Audley, 1534, lets it be known, 'laudes be to God,' that he is 'parfitt in mynde and hole in bodye' (iii). William Sheperde, 1557, 'steward to the right honourable Lorde Cobham,' is 'sicke in bodie and dreddinge the uncerteyne houre of death,' but for all that he is 'perfecte of remembrance.' Robert Hurste, 1627, calls to mind 'the manie dangers and hazards to which mankind is subject,' and 'considers withall that he ought to be in readiness with all joy and gladness to imbrace the visitation of the Almighty God.' John Pawpitt, 1655, is much more pathetically long-winded in the prologue to his will: 'Considering that all flesh is but as grasse and the glory thereof as the flowers of the field, and that we have noe continuance or dwelling Citty here in this world, but that we must dye when it pleaseth God, and finding through the weakness of my body that death doth as it were knocke att my dore to call me out of this miserable world, wherein my soule is kept as a prisoner in my naturall body, with a most willing heart and minde I doe render into the hands of my creator and heavenly father my soule which he of his fatherly goodness gave unto me at suche tyme as he fashioned me in my mother's wombe and hope to be saved in and by and through the meritts of Jesus Christ my only Lord and Saviour, and to be made partaker of the Kingdome of Glory.'

ii. The early P.C.C. wills relating to Hitchin can be traced easily enough from the indices printed by the British Record Society. Of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon wills at Somerset House, which date from 1479 onwards, there are twenty-three volumes with manuscript indices. The remaining group of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon wills at Peterborough, ranging from 1479–1600, are contained in eighteen volumes. There is a printed index of the whole by W. M. Noble. A separate index of the Hitchin wills proved in the court of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon has been made by Reginald L. Hine, and is, with the transcripts of 200 Hitchin wills, at the service of serious students.

iii. The references to all the wills cited in this chapter are to be found in the classified bibliography, No. 909, where the names of the testators are printed in alphabetical order.

Ten years later, 1665, Hitchin is visited by the Great Plague. One after another the people rush into Ralph Skynner's office to make their wills, which he begins for them with that significant phrase, 'Now in this frail time of mortality.' Some would-be testators are smitten before they have time to sign. Here, for example, is the will of Richard Swansley, who as parish clerk ought to have been up and doing, but could only gasp out his wishes to those terrified people who stood about his bed: '*Memorandum* that about the 25th September, 1665, Richard Swansley, the parishe Clerke, being visited by the pestilence in his house and very sicke and weak in body with the sayd desease, did declare his last will and testament nuncupative in these words, or the like in effect, *viz.* he speaking to William Swansley his brother who was then present in the house with him sayd, "I will that you shall have all the goods which I have to take all and pay all," but, being informed that the sayd William was fallen desperately sicke, he then declared his minde in these words, "I will that John Swansley my brother and Rebecca the wife of William my brother shall be my executors and take all my goods and parte them betwixt them without any disturbance." . . . All this he did declare with an intent that it should stand for his last will and testament in the presence of Jane Marshall the keeper of him in the sayd sicknesse.'

In the modern wills the terror of death and the anxiety of soul are much less evident. Francis Thatcher, 1720, is moved to become a testator simply 'for the quieting of my mind and for the settling of my temporall affaires and for the avoiding disputes and differences after my decease.' John Lovell, 1766, 'beying in good senses but in a very mideling state of helth, by the healp of God, make my one [own] last will.' His own is a poor thing, but then he cannot afford the legal aid of Lawrence, or, as he styled himself, Law. Times. The Registrar forgives the misspellings as soon as his fees are paid and the home-made will is proved.

II

Next in order comes the bequest of the soul with its accompanying statement of belief. This part of the will was frequently written in Latin, the rest of the will with its secular bequests being written in English. Here is the common form adopted in medieval days: 'I bequeth my soule unto almightye god and

to all the holy company in hevyn.' In course of time, however, the form has to be altered to suit the religious innovations of the age. By the end of the fifteenth century 'oure blissed lady saint Mary the Virgyne his glorious modre' is joined as legatee. After the Reformation the 'holy company of heaven' and 'oure blissed lady' are cut out; testators put their trust in 'the death and passion of Jesus Christe,' or throw themselves upon the mercy of 'the Comforter.' Here, for example, is the will of Thomas Chapman, 1581, the father of George Chapman, the Elizabethan poet: 'I Thomas Chapman of Hitchin, Yeoman, commit my sowle into the hands of God the Father Almightye my creator, to Jhesus Christ his dere sonne my alone saviour and redeemer, and to the holy ghost his elect spiritt my comforter and sanctifier three distinct persons and one eternall almightie and ever lovinge God, most assuredly trustinge in the mercy and favour of God through the only deathe passion and resurrection of Jhesus Christ by faith in his blood to have free pardon and full forgiveness of all my sinnes.' That becomes the common form for another hundred years, though some Christian souls like Elizabeth Docwra, 1616, go a step farther and 'expect an entrance to the fruition of eternall happiness.' After the seventeenth century, however, this religious testimony begins to wane. More wills are being drawn by the lawyers and fewer by the priests. Whatever the testators or their advisers believed or expected in the next world they kept to themselves. For example, John Wilson, the friend of Bunyan and the first pastor of the Hitchin Baptists, writing his own will in 1712, is anxious about his books, but makes no confession of faith. He *knows* Him whom he hath believed and that is enough. Edward Hickman, the Independent Minister, dying in 1781, has nothing to say about his dependence upon God. The Quakers, in death as in life, maintain a strict reserve; they go down into the darkness with not a word vouchsafed about their Inner Light.

The Testator, having disposed of his soul, must then dispose of his body, and give directions about its burial. This part of the will is also held important; for apparently it was not easy for a rich man to enter heaven without 'a thousand masses,' and poor men would starve themselves to death in order to have a splendid funeral. Listen to Master Lawrence Bertlott, registrar of the Bishop of Lincoln, who begins his will, 1471, in common form as we begin a sermon: 'In the name of the

fadre and son and Holy Goost Amen.' He will have a 'prest be founde to singe for me in the chirch of Hucchyn by the space of 8 yere, saying daily after the offertorie of the masse thise wordes at the auter ende "for the sowlez of Lawrence Bertlott and his faders and his moders and for all cristin sowles *De Profundis*." Also I wol yat at my moneth mynde day (iv) ther be said for me 1000 massez at Huchyn and at seint mary Overies Southwerk but in especial as many massez as can be provided for to be said at Huchyn that same day.' Each priest is to have 4d. for his pains. The prior of Wymondley also is to have 6s. 8d. and every canon of that house 3s 4d., 'to pray god for me and the same day to keep my *dirige* and masse of *requiem* and I wol that myn obite be kepte in the same Priory by the space of 15 yeres.' Bertlott requires his 'Executors or their assignes to worship God also during the years above rehersed,' and to see that the priests and the poor people get their money after the end of each commemoration service.

John Pulter, 1485, is a little more modest in his requirements: 'I wol that my funerall be honestly made and done to the laud of God and not for the pomp and veyne glory of this miserable world.' Nevertheless, 'for the remission of myne offenses,' he stipulates for a 'trentall plenar after the ordinance of St. Gregory,' i.e. for three masses on each of the ten chief festivals (v), and that 'for the space of XXX days they sing daily *Placebo*, *Dirige* (vi) and *Commendacions* all by note [i.e. with music], and after that my body be entered.' Edmund Brown, 1497, leaves 'XXXs for 3 virginals [i.e. masses of the B.V.M.] to be celebrated immediately after my decease.' John Middleton, 1509, makes provision for mourning at his 'moneth's mynde'; his executors are 'to cause 13 blacke gownes to be made and geven to 13 poore men in the honour of our Lorde and of his twelve apostelles.' Nicholas Mattock, 1521, says, 'I wille have at my buryall X torches, all the torches of one length as it may be; and iii tapers

iv. The repetition of the funeral services on the thirtieth day. A very customary commemoration.

v. Christmas, the Circumcision, the Purification, the Annunciation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and her nativity.

vi. Vespers for the dead were known as *Placebo* because the anthem before the first psalm was *Placebo Domino in regione vivorum* (Ps. cxvi. 9). At the matins for the dead the first anthem was *Dirige Domine Deus meus in conspectu tuo viam* (Ps. v. 8): hence the whole of the morning service for the dead, including the Mass, came to be designated as a *Dirige* or *Dirge*.

of waxe of iiii lbs a pece, and poore men to holde both the torches and the tapers, and every person to have for his labour, iiiid.' Simon Bradyson, 1531, requires ' V masses of the V wounds of our Lord Jesus to be seid with V priests on the day of my buriall.' John Trustram, 1554, filially desires ' to be buried within the parish church of Hichyn at the feete of my father.' Sir Robert Lytton, 1555, Lord of Minsden, directs that ' funerall sermons be preached for me at Knebworth, Hutchyn, Baldock and Letchworth, the preacher to have 10s. for every sermon.' John Warner, 1558, gives ' unto the reparations of Hitchen Church xxs. upon condicion that I maye have a grave stone to laye upon me.'

By 1575 the Reformation had established itself in the land. You can already mark the change in the wording of the wills. There is an end of obits and trentals and month's minds, of candles and torches and processions. When Thomas Cartwright of Royston, the champion of English Puritanism and the foster-father of the Hitchin Puritans, comes to die in 1603, he directs that his ' bodie shall be layd up in the churchyard of the place where it shall please the Lord to call me out of this life without pompe and superstition used in the Popish Synagogues in times past.' Simplicity more and more is to be Executor's rule for burying ' God's creature ' the body. Yet it is not easy for any Christian Soul to part in silence from the inseparable companion of its sojourn upon earth. And why should that be called ' vile ' which is, or might be made, the temple of the Holy Ghost? One testator asks rather tenderly that it may be ' buried in the church-yard of Hitchin amongst my oulde frendes.' John Field, 1725, cannot bear the thought of having to be buried in woollen according to the Act of 1667. You can almost hear him muttering Pope's line: ' Odious! in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke.' ' *Item*,' he puts down in his will, ' my mynde is that my executors shall bury me in *linen only*.' They must take the risk of the fine of £5 which the law imposes (vii). Henry Taylor, 1748, is anxious about having his grave large enough, for he is a big man and he knows how careless sextons are: ' I give to my Grave Digger one ginne that he take kare to make my grave

vii. Field's executors did as they were told and buried him in linen. To avoid detection they had him interred not at Hitchin, but in an obscure village over the Bedfordshire border. But truth will out. ' 1728. Dec. 26. Buried John Field of Hitchin, Gent., in *Linnen*, of which information was given before a magistrate.'

full large, and as sum Incuridgement to Mow down the Weeds in the Sumer season. It is my desire to have a strong oke coffin without any Super Fluishes but to be full large. I would have Wine and Ale to all the people to drinke, and they that are bearers to the ground my will is that thay be Invited to Super.'

Women, as may be expected, are more particular than men about appearances. Mary Swain, 1764, requires 'to be carried to the Grave in a Hearse with 4 horses, and the mourners to be carried in post chaises, and the relations to have hatbands, ribbands, and gloves.' Barbara Gregory, 1776, wishes, 'to be buried between my 2 husbands, to have a good substantial elm coffin lined with white, a Breast-plate with my name and date,

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to be decently nailed, and 6 of the best handles used on coffins. And that my executor set down a neat pair of grave stones to my memory and some suitable epitaph.' Ann Trigg, 1769, begs that her age shall not be disclosed. Gloves are to be given to all that come to see her, including her washerwoman. The neighbours are to have 2 bottles of wine (viii). Sarah Newbury, 1824, even prepares particulars for the service: 'The words I

viii. The vicar of a parish near Hitchin, whose name I must suppress, thought it a pity that his mourners should have all the wine. He had a bottle of port buried with him when he died.

have chosen for my funerall you will find recorded in the chapter of verse , likewise the hymn of the Supplement No. .' But, like a woman, she cannot make up her mind, and the blanks are left unfilled. The Rev. Mr. Sloper, to whom she gives £1 for the sermon, would no doubt see it through, though she must have pained him by spelling his name 'Slopper.' We may bring this section to an end with a clause out of the will, dated 1869, of Thomas Gorham Pierson, a solicitor in Tilehouse Street: 'Having been deprived by an act of the Legislature, in conformity with a Misfounded National Prejudice, of the right of interment with those of my family who have gone hence before me, I direct that my remains be interred in the vault I have constructed in the hill of the estate bequeathed by me to Stephen William Clarkson Pierson, having no faith in the merits of consecrated ground, nor hope of salvation from the Burial Service, but only in and through the only One triune God Jehovah I AM and the Blood of His Son once shed for man and not continually in the Memorial observance thereof' (ix).

III

Now we come to the religious bequests, of grave concern to such as value a good name in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. These also follow an order of their own, and in medieval wills, which were commonly inspired, if not actually written, by the clergy, they are seldom wanting. First of all comes the 'mortuary according to the custom of the town'; and here in the will of William Chambers, 1519, is its usual form: 'I bequeath to the high aulter of the parish church of Hutchyn for my tythes and oblacions forgotten or necligently witholden in discharge of my soul, 13s. 4d.' After that the testator remembers the diocese: 'For the Mother churche of Lincolne, 4d.' Then the Church and the religious houses of his own parish, the bequests to which have been sufficiently illustrated already in this history; see Vol. I, pp. 92–4, 139–40, 157. Finally, if the testator is a man of substance, he will give a dole to all the churches of his own deanery, or to each of the four chief orders of friars, Carmelite, Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian: e.g. the will

ix. In death as in life Pierson was thwarted; for his body was not allowed to be buried in the Cave of Machpelah, as his hill-side vault was called.

of William Astrix, 1501, 'I bequeath to the 5 Orders of Frers 5 Nobles' (x).

You will, of course, find many religious bequests outside these categories. For example, John Pulter, 1485, bequeaths 'to Maister Robert Calton, vicar of Ipolites, a booke of myne of Hampole's (xi) werke upon the Psalter of David and other contentes in the same to pray for me.' William Astrix, 1501, formerly Lord Mayor of London, bequeaths 'all my evill dedys to the devellis of hell whenes they came fro' (xii). James Tydye, 1517, bequeaths 'to the chapell in the Market Place a quarter malte,' which apart from some bare references in early deeds is the only evidence we have that such a chapel existed. Margery Astrix, 1523, bequeaths 'unto the parishe Churche of sainte Peters in Cornhill a paxe of silver and gilt garnished with perles and other stones and also set and garnished with synkefoyles which is in a litell Spruce Chest.'

John Lorkyn, 1543, gives a red bullock to the parson of Knebworth 'to remember me in his beadroll.' But the bullock and the bullock's descendants are to be his for his life only; 'and so to be lefte from parson to parson for ever.' John Audley, 1620, gives 'unto Mr. G. Denne, Minister at Hitchin, to encourage him to take paines in the ministry, 20s.' Edmund White, 1653, gives twenty shillings 'towards a new pulpitt chushian for the parish of Willyan.' Richard Tristram, 1785, provides '£100 for the instruction of poor children in the first principles of the Christian religion, as nothing seems to me so likely to be a means of stemming that torrent of vice and immorality so prevalent amongst the lower classes of people as teaching them to read the Scriptures and qualifying them for service in Respectable Families.'

Then as now it was considered no small part of religion to deliver the poor and needy; and the doles to them come appropriately in this part of the will. One rejoices to see how open-handed the early testators were. Many of them could testify

x. The 5th Order, here referred to, would be the Friars of the Sack, otherwise called Friars of the Penance of Jesus Christ.

xi. Richard Rolle of Hampole was the chief representative of a school of mystic pietism which poured out in English verse and prose its passionate longing for a spiritual love, contrasting strangely with the arid scholastic logic of its age. See Miss Hope Allen's *Writings attributed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole and materials for his biography*, 1928.

xii. There is an echo here of the spiteful will which Richard I is said to have made: 'I geve my pride to the Templeres and Hospitelers, my covetise to white monks, and my lecherie to prelates of holy cherches' (Trevisa, *Higden*, viii. 159)

with Zacchæus: 'The half of my goods I give to the poor.' And there is no niggardly appraising of merit, none of St. Paul's 'certain contribution for poor saints,' or those that 'walk in integrity.' Good, bad and indifferent, deserving and undeserving, they are all alike 'God's poor.'

So, in 1470, you find Lawrence Bertlott ordering his executors to provide 'a quarter of befe' for 'the poor prisoners being in Newgate,' and further quarters to their distressed brethren in Ludgate, Southwark and Breadstreet. They are to 'pray the said poor prisoners of ther charitees to say *De Profundis* and other ther praiers' for his soul, 'and for alle cristin soules.' If his 'moneth's mind' happens to fall on a Friday, the executors are to substitute 'as muche fisshe as shal cost 5s. for their Refreshing.' John Middleton, 1509, distributes the whole of his residuary estate 'in deeds of pitie and charitie, that is to say in mending of highwayes, towards poor maydens mariages and in relievyng of poor house holds.' That good soul Margery Astrix, 1523, gives 'a lode of colys amonges pour people in the wyntre ward,' 3s. 4d. to 'the poer syke people of every lazar house within 7 miles of London,' and £10 to a necessitous 'scholer of Cambridge beyng a lerner in grammar and entending to be a priest.' Joan Godfrey, 1544, leaves 'IIIId. to every poure man's child at Langley ende.' George Flinders, 1547, bequeaths 'Xs in brede to the povertie of Hichyn.' Thomas Humblestone, 1595, sets apart '£10 to be laide out in Barley by Thomas Chapman, gentleman, and Matthew Audley, yeoman, and converted into Malte and the yearlie increase thereof to redounde to the use of the poore of Hytchyn, to be disposed of at the discretion of the said Thomas and Matthew and tenne of the richest men in common estimation of the toune.'

As a rule it is in this part of the will that the testator remembers 'those whom I have lifted from the font as godfather,' and those apprentices, servants and retainers of his who are themselves not far removed from the status of the poor (xiii). Here it is that the best side of a man is most tenderly reflected: 'I will and bequeath unto Elizabeth Jakys, wydowe, an old servant of myne, 20s.

xiii. It follows that the upper class of servants, e.g. stewards, do not come into this category. The bequests to them are very rare, and for a good reason. Once a rich nobleman made his will and left handsome legacies to all his domestics with the exception of his steward. On being asked to explain his inconsistency: 'I leave him out,' said he, 'because he has been in my service for more than twenty years.'

And farder I will that my wif, being her dame and myne executrice, be good still unto her and to see her kept her liffes tyme.' Moved by the same spirit, William Papworth, 1464, gives ' 2 ewe lambs unto my two men servants and 2 to my mayde servants.' Edward Feld, 1520, gives ' to Dix my servant III shepe, a calfe of a yere old and a wyneling [weanling] of this year.' James Cheetham, 1523, leaves ' to every godson that I have a bushel of malte,' and ' to my boy Bedforthe my motley, a quarter of whete, a quarter of malte, an ewe, a lambe and a silver spone.' To ' John Umfre, prentice, whom I broughte up of a child ' Edward Trycotte, 1540, makes over the greater part of his worldly goods. To ' Henry Corse my boy,' William Corsore, 1544, gives ' a horse with a pack saddle and all things belonging to the said horse.' John Style, says his mistress Joan Godfrey, 1544, is ' to have his dwelling within the house this wyntere.' ' My servant John Bedwell,' says Robert Hynde, 1552, is to have ' the yelowe cowe with white back.'

Now and again you light upon a will which shows the other side of the picture. For example, Robert Audley, 1543, after twenty years' faithful service for the first Ralph Radcliffe of Hitchin Priory, wishes his books to be distributed ' at my Master's discretion,' and bequeaths 4 marks apiece to each of his Master's children and a like sum to his mistress.

IV

Now at last the testator's conscience is clear and he may consider his own kith and kin. This is no simple matter, for in these earlier periods of domestic history a man's estate does not lie so much in lands and tenements (xiv), or even in coin of the realm. Nor is it the fashion to refer to property in general terms as real and personal estate. Goods and chattels, stock and implements of trade, food and raiment, all this household stuff has to be specifically bequeathed. That is why these wills, and the inventories that were lodged with them, are so invaluable. You may look upon a sixteenth or seventeenth-century house in your town and vainly speculate upon its past. If only its timbers

xiv. The reader should bear in mind the distinction, no longer existing, between the ' will,' which disposed of the testator's land, and the ' testament ' by which he appointed his personal representative and disposed of his chattels. In medieval times there would be two separate documents; the will generally written out in the vulgar tongue, the testament commonly in Latin.

and its walls would speak. But you can at least put back the old furniture in its place, for it has been bequeathed, piece by piece and from generation to generation. You can do more. You can clothe the very ghosts that haunt there, not with white sheets, but with their old-time bravery; all those doublets, gowns, kirtles and cloaks with which they arrayed themselves when they were 'in the body.'

It takes many wills to furnish one English home. Here we can cite but a few, and must leave the rest to the intelligent reader's imagination and to the research of serious students. And first of all let us cite Edward Spicer, 1518, who leaves 'to my III daughters each of them a bedd and a bullocke.' Margery Astrix, 1523, gives 'a standing Cupp of silver all gilt chased upright wayinge 30 ounces and a half to the Felisshipe of the Fisshemongers of London,' . . . in whose noble Company her husband had made his money when he was on earth. This precious relic perished in the Great Fire of London. She gives a similar cup to 'the grocers of London to the use of their hall'; and 'to my son Thomas a grete standing cupp with a cover of parcell gilt and on the knopp of the said cover a squyrell . . . also 9 sponnes with woodruffes on the ends' (xv). Agnes Hemmyng, 1533, gives 'to Thomas my girdell of friers knottys, and to Robert the girdell I was married in.' Lawrence Barn, 1533, gives back 'to Joan my wyfe all the goods she brought with her,' and adds 'a gown, a red kertell, a peire of beads of jette the which ware my other wiffes.' Edward Trycotte, 1540, yeoman, in disposing of his goods and raiment speaks of '2 table cloths, the one I bought in France, and the other a playn one; the great coffer with image worke paynteyde on it, another bound with iron, my chafendyshe of laten [mixed metal] that standeth by the fire, two heads of Seynte John of Amyasse and XV gaudes of silver.' Agnes Audley, 1541, refers to 'my greate frame [bed] and my cheiste in the chamber and the folde table in the hall.'

John Lorkyn, 1543, leaves his wife 'the redde cowe with its calfe.' Margaret Grave, 1545, gives 'to each one of my iii natural children 1 mylche cowe and one yve of bees.' Alice

xv. By her time spoons were coming more into common use. In the fourteenth century one spoon had been held a sufficient luxury for a great man. 'I bequeath,' says a bishop in 1295, 'the spoon which was deputed for my mouth.' Even in the sixteenth century spoons were regarded as precious. Joan Serle of Hitchin, 1557, bequeaths to her son 'ii silver sponys and not to sell them.'

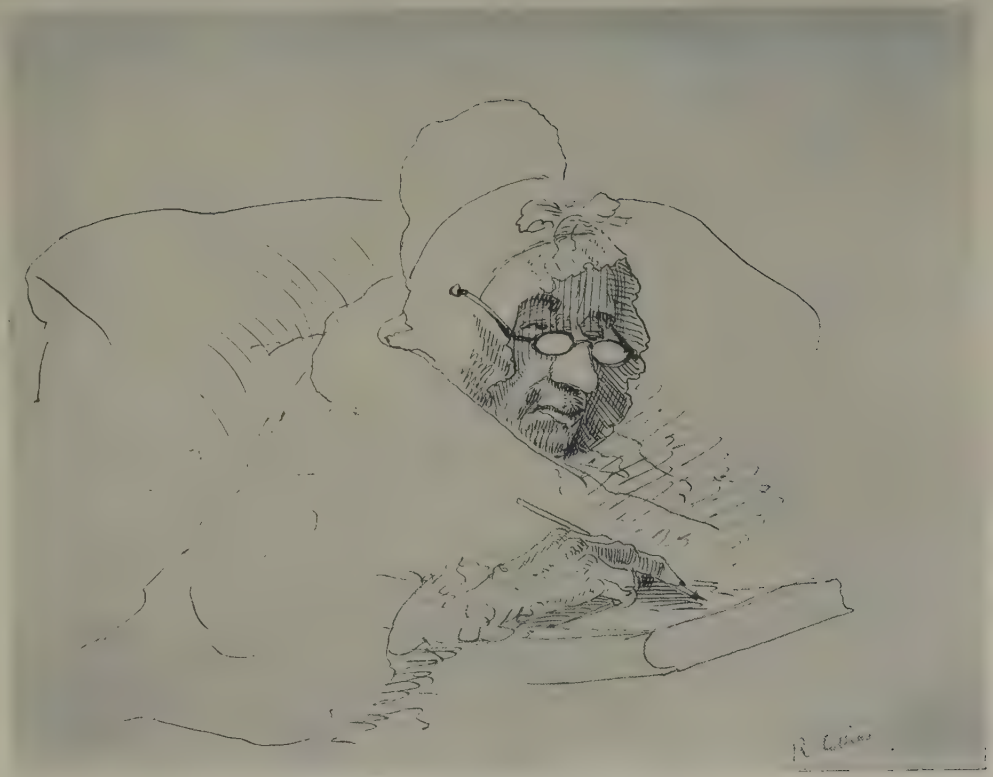
Lacye, 1545, gives 'to my sonne John the coffere that was the vicar's.' Thomas Mondys, 1551, gives 'to Thomas my sonne my hallynge [wall-hanging or tapestry] that is peyntede with Robenhode.' Sir Robert Lytton, Lord of Minsden, 1555, bequeaths to his brother Rowland 'my grete bedde with the Testore coloure of yellow and blewe satten embrodered with flyenge horses and my armes wrought upon it and the Curtens of the same bed with yellow and blewe sarcenet.' In the last year of Bloody Mary, William Hubbard makes over to his heir such things as might help him through those dangerous times—to wit, 'a sword, a daggere and my best purse.' Moved by the same thought, James Cotton, 1563, resigns 'to Edwyn my sonne my sword and buckler, and after his death it to remayne in the kyndrede.' To his wife he commends the care of his 'spytte and dryppyng panne and the platterys and the pewter dyshes and sawcers and candlesticks.' In the catalogue of Margeret Lawe's effects, 1568, you will find all manner of household gear: 'a great cheiste with picketures thereon, one great bell-candlestick, one spice mortar with pestell, one mazer bound with silver, my hollye daye frocke and my best petty coat'; she does not even overlook 'my bed panne.' In the same way, Agnes Audley, 1607, passes on to her married daughter 'the warminge pan' which had been such a comfort to herself.

James Chambers, 1577, bequeaths 'to John Clements my blynde horse to be delivered to him immediately after Easter next.' Stephen Fox, 1581, who styles himself a gentleman, bequeaths a 'carpett,' a very great luxury in that age. Joane Audley, 1581, gives her daughter 'the quilte that lyeth on me and one fyne sheet with an open seame.' Edward Hurst, 1586, gives his daughter Mary '£5 to buy her weddinge apparrell, my second fether bed, my second coverlett, one boulster, 2 pillows . . . 2 silver spoones, whereof one is all gilded and the other an apostle spoone, and one brass kettle.' Edward Howe, 1603, sets up his son Philip with 'my hatt which I weare and my night cappe,' and gives John Hammond of Pirton another 'linen cappe wrought with needleworke.' Elizabeth Joyce enriches her sister-in-law with 'my best beaver hatt, my Damaske gowne, and Damaske petticoat of a sea-green colour.' Mary Welch, 1748, out of 'the poor allottery' which her father left her by testament, bequeaths a 'fireshovel, tongs and bellows.'

Mary Papworth, 1759, bestows Stanhope's *Paraphrases* upon

the Epistles and Gospels, 4 vols., and Young's *Night Thoughts*, upon Cordelia Moor, but wrecks her pious intention by adding a copy of Matt Prior's *Poems*, though she may, of course, have been misled by the extraordinary dictum of Dr. Johnson that 'Prior is a lady's book.' Something of the same incongruity appears in the will of Mary Corrie, 1762, who gives her brother George 'a Bible and a pair of sheets.' Elizabeth Hurst, 1762, keeps her disposing mind entirely on the earth; she is thinking at the last of 'my grey flowered silk Gown and my largest porridge pot.' Sarah Boden, widow, 1764, goes to join him whom she had loved and lost awhile and leaves her rings to their children: 'To my loving son John one gold ring with this Posy, to wit *Let love abide till Death divide*, and to my loving son Thomas one gold ring with this Posy *In Christ and thee my comfort be*.' Mary Swain, spinster, of Preston hamlet, 1764, has no one to love and very little to leave: 'To my niece Mary Swain my best stays and my worst, together with the nutmeg grater and the jack and spit. To May Doggett my second-best stays, my red cloake and a frying pan.'

Philip Rotherham, 1765, is a man beloved by all and has a world of friends: 'I give a guinea apiece to all my neighbours in Bancroft.' Benjamin Lucas, 1766, parts his raiment, almost too resplendent for a Quaker, amongst his own people. To his brother 'my green night gown and my whip and cane.' To William Smith of Olney (a cousin) 'my pair of best spurs.' To sister Ann 'my dear poor Father's shirts and neckcloths.' Daniel Joyner, 1769, hands down to posterity the 'tea table and corner cupboard,' the work of his own capable hands, and as an afterthought puts in 'the Flatt Irons.' Ann Trigg, 1769, gives 'a crown piece of Queen Anne to Jane Smith, and my green silk-quilted pettit-coat and my brown camblett riding habit to Mrs. Hessman.' Thomas Kent, 1775, like a careful man, remembers 'the china slop Bason'; in the right hands it may still serve for future generations. Margaret Albury, 1800, is concerned about her 'half-pint pot and pepper box.' There is an old silk dressing-gown she would like William Dunnage to have, and, as he is writing a History of Hitchin, it may be handy for him to have 'my map of England.' 'My books to be divided amongst the family as they can agree but I hope there will bee no words, and pray don't sell none of my books. The one as Mr. Clark gave me take care of for his sake.' Poor old dear. She is evidently



REBECCA COLLINS MAKING HER OWN WILL

From a sketch by Samuel Lucas

anticipating trouble as she looks her last on the greedy faces of her relations. ' I hope,' she adds with a sigh, ' I have done the thing as is ritt on all sides; in my own mind I think I have.'

To conclude this section, let us cite the will of Eleanor Tame, to which she sets her mark (it is all she can do) in 1841. She comes of a good family and she keeps up appearances to the very last. There is hardly a thing to leave, but she will not die intestate as the vulgar people do. After describing herself as 'residing at Skynners almshouses,' she gives her ' Tea Caddy and six silver tea spoons ' to her daughter Mary Ann; her ' picture of a farmyard ' to nephew James, and the ' china tea service, tea tray and sugar tongs ' to her niece Eleanor.

V

Having disposed of the household stuff, the testator must decide about the winding up, or the carrying on, of his trade or profession, and the possibility of providing some maintenance thereout for his widow. In this difficult part of his will so much depends on the ability and the family feeling of the son. Is he capable of succeeding to his father, and will he be an unfailing support to his mother? Some testators are evidently doubtful on this score. For example, Thomas Lowe, 1509, who has been a hard-working wheelwright all his life, gives his ' ax, an andax of winybyll and a bayse [=baze = lever] to Thomas if he go to the occupation and craft and cast hymself to thryft.' Anyhow, the timber is to be sold to pay the debts and ' my mother shall have free lybertye in the yarde during her lyff.' William Chambers, 1519, on the other hand, has no hesitation. His is an old-established business: ' I give to John my sonne my Tanne House with all the Fattes beyng in the same and XX daker (xvi) of leder [leather] and X lode of Barke.' John Warner, 1558, yeoman, gives his farmhouse and his ' freeland lyenge and beynge in Walseworthe fielde ' to his son Robert, but so that ' my sonne nor his heyres shall alyene nor sell my house which I have given unto hym to no persone but onlye to his brothers and so remayne to the name of the Warners for ever.' Leonard Day, 1559, gives ' to Leonarde my sonne my stawle in the market place.'

John Huckle, 1575, gives all his baking plant and utensils,

xvi. Daker = the number of ten, being the customary unit of exchange in dealing in certain articles, especially hides or skins.

including ' my biggest brasse pott and one pair of tonges,' to John, his son. Three hundred and fifty years later [1925] his descendant, John Huckle, is still carrying on the same family business. Francis Berry, 1723, clockmaker, bequeaths to his wife Alice ' my little clock in the red [lacquer] case,' to his son Francis ' all my mathematicall books, papers and instruments, and also my horizontall dyal of Mr. Oughtred's projection ' (xvii), to John Rowell ' my large horizontall Dyall shewing the Azithmuths and point of the compass and every second minute,' and to his son Robert ' my business as clock maker.' Michael Samm, 1752, who is a ' coller maker,' hands on to his nephew, Thomas Samm, ' all my working tools (except my vice), my right to the barn in the Cock Yard, and my place at the water side where I now dress my leather.' Richard Tristram, 1785, gives ' to William Wilshere all my law books and also all my law MSS. cases and books of precedents. I also give him my hand organ and all my optical and philosophical instruments whatsoever.'

It was not customary to give the widow any considerable interest in the testator's trade or business. She had to be content with ' all her arrayment with gurdells, bedes, rynges and all other appareil that belongeth to hir body,' and in addition she had her dower. If she were, in medieval days, the parson's wife, or rather his concubine, she got nothing at all, for the bishop's official took her portion and gave it to the poor. But

xvii. Gentle and exhausted reader, if you would like a rest in the middle of this chapter, send for a copy of Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark, 1898, and read there (ii. 105–114) a most entertaining sketch of Oughtred, 1574–1660. By 1597, at the age of twenty-three, he had written his *Horologiographica Geometrica*, and by 1600 he had conceived the invention of the projected horizontal instrument for delineating dials upon any kind of plane, to which Berry in his will refers. ' His head,' says Aubrey, ' was always working. He went not to bed till 11 a clock; had his tinder box by him, and on the top of his bed-staffe he had his inkhorne fix't. Sometimes he went not to bed in two or three nights, and would not come down to meales till he had found out the *quaesitum*.' A trying husband, but his wife could be trying, too. ' She was a penurious woman and would not allow him to burn candle after supper, by which meanes many a good notion is lost and many a probleme unsolved, so that Mr. Henshawe, when he was there, bought candle, which was a great comfort to the old man.' Oughtred, it seems, was as hard on his pupils as himself. ' One Mr. Austin (a most ingeniose man) was his scholar, and studyed so much that he became mad, fell a laughing and so dyed. Mr. Stokes, another scholar, fell mad, and dreamt that the good old gentleman came to him and gave him good advice and so he recovered.' According to Ralph Greatrex, the mathematical instrument-maker, Oughtred himself ' dyed with joy for the coming in of the king.' But before that he ' burned a world of papers and sayd that the world was not worthy of them; he was so superb.'

some husbands go out of their way to make the lot of their widows less desolate. For example, John Middleton, 1509, not only gives Alice, his wife, an interest in his 'londes tenements leasses and pastures in the towne and feldes of Hychyn,' but there are a hundred marks for 'the infannte beyng within the womb of my said wif if god provide any suche infannte.' Apparently God did not provide, for in a few months Dame Alice became the second wife of Sir Thomas More, of blessed memory. Everyone remembers the portrait of her as *nec bella nec puella*—neither a beauty nor a girl, and who that has once heard it can forget that tongue of hers which sharpened itself on the edge of her husband's misfortunes: 'Tilly Vally, what will you do, Mr. More? Will you sit and make goslings in the ashes? Would to God I were a man and you should quickly see what I would do.' But when all is said that can disparage her, it should be remembered that she sold her own clothes to keep the home at Chelsea going (xviii).

Again, William Chambers, 1551, gives 'Margaret my wief her dwelling in my house and fyerwood for her occupying during her wydowhed.' In another will of that period a daughter, so long as she remains unmarried, is 'to be free of the fire.' William Brockett, 1556, will allow his wife to dwell in his house for one year. After that she is to find another home for herself. And she is not to take away with her when she goes 'the long table, a cupboarde and the hanginges as they be now at this present tyme, and also a Mylne called a querne and a great Cheste in the lofte.' John Camfield of Langley hamlet, 1625, is still more severe with his relict. All that she can have is 'one hogg, one flitch of bacon, half the cheese in the house and half the poultry in the yard.' Thomas Gorham Pierson, by his will dated June 17,

xviii. A good deal of research work is being done by Professor R. W. Chambers, Mrs. Carwardine Probert and myself to establish the identity and antecedents of this Alice Middleton. She is thought, from the arms on her tomb, to have been an Arden. Of her daughters by John Middleton one, Alice, married for her first husband Thomas Elryngton of Hitchin, gent., who by his will, dated 22 Sept., 1523, devised his seat at Hitchin and his other properties to his sons in tail and in default of issue to John More, the son of Sir Thomas More. As there were issue, the reversion to John More did not take effect. The second husband of this Alice was Sir Giles Alington, the co-executor with Sir Thomas More of her first husband's estate. There is a further connection between Hitchin and the More family, for in 1504 a third part of the manor of Charlton had been granted to John More, then serjeant-at-law, the father of Sir Thomas (64. 3. 350). In the lay Subsidy Rolls for 1523 appear the names of

'John More in goods £4 2s. 0d.
Thomas More in stipend 20s. 4d.'

1869, declares that his wife ' Christiana Jane, having withdrawn herself from me without my assent, and petitioning for a separation on at best trifling grounds, and having rendered to me next to no assistance, but on the contrary proved herself to have been very artful, designing, provocative, grasping and overbearing, she deserves and I desire that she may have nothing more than she can legally obtain for her life.'

Death, that comes like a thief in the night, leaves other folk besides widows and children unprovided; and the wills that speak of them are sorrowful reading. For example, Agnes Hemmyng, 1533, bequeaths her mazers, silver spoons, beds, platters and dishes ' to my sonne William towards his household for that he is a lone man.' Lettice Banester, 1609, gives ' to John Dawson who should have been my husband £9 and 20s. more to bury me which said £10 is in the handes of my [step] father-in-law [i.e. to be] Ambrose Smyth of Hitchin.' Lettice's mother takes ' my best gowne and kyrtle and neckercher,' and ' all the rest of my goods I give to my friend John Dawson.' Thomas Empson, 1719, who describes himself as ' a single-man,' but was on the point of being married when the fell-sergeant death touched him on the shoulder, leaves his brown suit to his brother, his grey suit to a nephew and all else ' to my loving friend Rebecca Sly.' Edward Pryor, barber-surgeon, 1751, dies wondering what he can do to amuse his little girl when he is dead and gone, ' I give my daughter Mary bells for a child to play with.'

VI

Last of all comes the appointment of executors and their duties and their rewards. Last but by no means the least important, for a bad executor will play ducks and drakes with the best of wills, and the temptations to go wrong are great. Moreover, the reputation of executors never yet stood high, as you may tell from that old rhyme in the *Survey of London*, ed. Kingsford, 1. 115:—

> ' Women be forgetful, children be unkind,
> Executors are covetous and take what they can find.'

You may set a curse, as many testators do, on such as maladminister the estate, *cujus animam Deus deleat de libro vitae* (whose soul may God blot out from the book of Life). You may require

JOHN HAWKINS TAKING INSTRUCTIONS FOR MRS. HAILEY'S WILL

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas, 1862

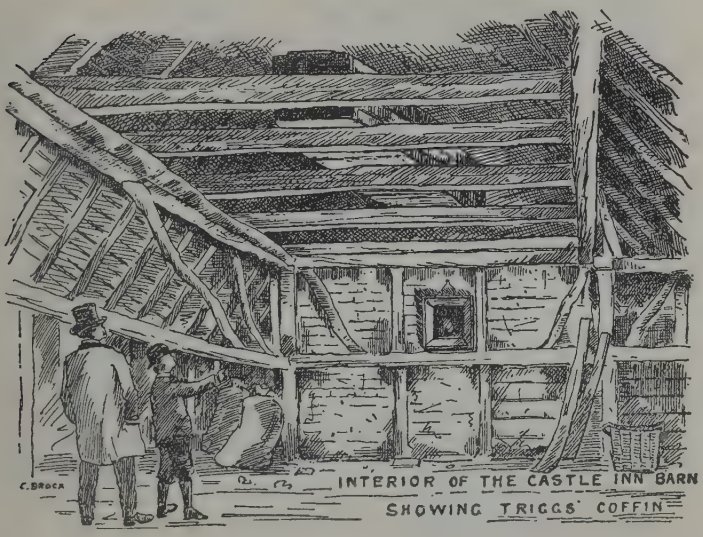
them to answer in their accounts as if they stood at the last day before God's judgment-seat. Or you may bribe them into decent behaviour with your best cloak and doublet, or, as John Scoot, 1491, bribed his attorney and executor Lawrence Tristram, with 'my short gowne of russett.' Or you may do as early testators did, appoint an overseer or supervisor to keep an eye on your executors and risk the old proverb which says that 'Two secutors and an overseere make thre theves' (Harleian MSS. 3038).

No! The only safety is to choose an 'indifferent person,' a neutral in your family feuds and in his character beyond reproach. Thus, Sir John Sturgeon, 1492, 'makes and ordeyns the most reverend fadre in God my lord Archbisshop of Canterbury, Chauncelar of England, my most especial good and gracious lord, to be the oversear of this same my testament, beseeching his good grace at the reverence of Criste to take upon him the payne and labor of oversight and of his charite and godly disposition to sey sume praier for my soule.' William Astrix, 1501, makes 'William Mylbourne, now being Chambleyn of London, myne overseer, and he to have for his labor my grete Rynge with myne Armes.' The widow, Margery Astrix, when she comes to die in 1523, confides the oversight of her will to 'Richard Broke, one of the King's Justices,' and gives him £10 for his pains. James Cheetham, 1523, says: 'I will that none of my kinsfolk shall not meddle with none but that Edward Tricotte my supervisor shall despose of all.' Edward Tricotte himself, 1540, appoints George Kent as his supervisor, 'to have for his labor XXVIs. VIIId. and an olde noble of golde.' John Wilshere, who died at the Church House in 1836, appointed the Lord Chancellor as his executor, which 'occasioned considerable trouble as of course he would not act' (966). A testator of 1840 appoints as his executor John Morgan, who was much in demand at the time, for as parish clerk he could see the funeral through, as a printer he could prepare the black-edged memorial cards and as a poet he was always willing to throw in a 'copy of verses' for the relations, e.g. *Lines on the very sudden and affecting death of Miss Laura Stanton of Hitchin which took place there on Saturday, January* 21, 1832, *after a short but severe illness, aged* 20. *Written on the day of her funeral.* He certainly earned his reward: 'I give to my friend John Morgan for his trouble my best Nite Gown and my Bigest Boots.' In the solicitor's office to which

I am attached, we have always thought it better that testators should appoint the family lawyer as executor and give him, as Mrs. Hailey gave our predecessor, John Hawkins, a legacy of £1,000. No one who has undertaken the arduous and thankless office of an executor can have felt that he was too handsomely rewarded; for in every estate there is more to be done than the testator ever dreamed of. It was ever so. For example, the executor of Sir John Sturgeon, 1492, has to go over to Calais and be involved in accounts going back over goodness knows how many years. The Staple of Calais is to have 40s., but it is 'to be deducted upon my debenters due to me by the said company.' Furthermore, Sturgeon wills and ordains 'that if any person or persons hereafter complayne that I have deiled with thaym in beyeng or selling other wise then according to good conscience my executors upon due prove shall make restution.' A nice thought on his part, but evidently he had forgotten some of the shady things he had done in his time as the King's Master of Munitions (see Vol. I, p. 140), which his poor, exasperated executors were not allowed to forget. Over the will of Nicholas Tydye, 1532, also there is an infinity of trouble, for by his will the testator has involved himself and them in a whole series of secret trusts, e.g. 'I give Xs to Sir Vicar of Hichyn the which he does knowe what to do therewith.' Then, again, testators are so vague in the way they phrase their wills. 'I wish my son to have my house at Charlton in as lardge and ample maner as ever it was myne.' It means that the executors have to rummage about in the deed-chest and find out whether the property is freehold or copyhold or leasehold or what it is. And besides, where are the deeds? Thomas Kent, 1558, says that 'all my evidences are in the trunke hutche.' Another testator says they are to be found enclosed 'in my booke with the grene keuyering' [covering]. But they may be anywhere.

Here again is another testator who makes a bequest to his daughter 'if she shal be maried worshippfully.' A condition not quite void for uncertainty, but one that may result in the executor having his face thoroughly scratched. Then, too, there are those bothersome directions at the latter end of the will. The executors are to see that all deferred legacies are 'lodged within the Chamber of London for the more suretie and profitt of my children according to the custom of the said Citie.' James Lucas, 1748, stipulates that his marriage settlement trustee shall

not ' finger any of my money, I knowing him to be a dishonest man and that he forged a note of Twenty Pounds upon me.' Ann Trigg wills and desires ' my Executors as soon as conveniently may be after my decease to cause the body of my late uncle Henry Trigg to be removed into Stevenage Churchyard from the place where he now lies with as much privacy as possible, and I do hereby give and leave the sum of 40s. for that purpose ' (xix). William Thomas, 1790, directs that ' my Gray Mare shall be



xix. By his will, proved at Hitchin on October 15, 1724, Henry Trigg, grocer of Stevenage, committed his body to the west end of his hovel, where it was to be decently laid upon a floor prepared by his executor ' upon the purlin.' There it was to stay for at least thirty years, or until ' the General Resurrection when I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God.' The body was accordingly enclosed in a coffin, and the coffin placed upon the rafters of the said ' hovel ' at the back of the *Old Castle Inn*. The number of persons who have gone on pilgrimage to see that coffin speaks volumes for the curiosity of mankind. It has always been an open question in Stevenage whether Ann Trigg's executors did remove the body. At any rate, the coffin remained on the rafters. John Moore of Hitchin told me, just before he died, in 1927, that he in his youth had spoken with an old carpenter who had been hired to make a new coffin bound with iron in place of the old one, which was perishing. In transferring the body he took a lock of hair and a tooth just to prove that it was still there.

shot immediately after my decease and decently buried, wrapt up in a cloth with her shoes on.'

At last it is done. The good have been rewarded. The bad have been cut off with a shilling. The executors and the supervisors have been directed in their duties. It remains only to call in a scrivener to make a fair copy of the will; and he must do it quickly, for the beneficiaries are in torment lest the testator should expire before he signs. Let the sick man be primed with brandy and propped up with two extra pillows. Let the family lawyer, if need be, guide his trembling hand. Let the witnesses see they do not fumble with the pen. It is finished. The lawyers and doctors and relations disappear. Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.

* * * * *

It used to be said of Francis Bragge, sometime Vicar of Hitchin, that he was a prolonged and painful preacher. But he could on occasion be fervid and dramatic. It is told how, one Sunday morning in 1695, he opened his sermon on this wise: 'In the name of God. Amen. Here (holding it up as a sign and testimony) is the last will and testament of me Francis Bragge which I made when I first came among you.' Then he asked them point-blank how many of them had had the forethought to put their affairs in order and prepare for their latter end. What madness to leave duties so essential until one was hovering on the brink of eternity. 'Our Powers and Faculties, both of Soul and Body, are then generally mightily Disorder'd and very little Serviceable, our Apprehension dull'd, and Memory weakened and impair'd; our Minds distracted by fears and uncertainties, and our bodies Languishing, full of Pains and great Discomposures' (952. 41).

Sound and salutary words, no doubt. But in the time of our health we do not listen to them. In the same way a lawyer may assure his clients that will-making will lengthen out their days. But, only half persuaded, they put off the appointment from day to day: 'When I have a convenient season I will call for thee.' The fact is we do not like to be reminded of our mortality, and we feel in our very bones that the signing of a will amounts to an admission. May we not be allowed to cherish our illusions? Are we not the lords of creation? What we have, do we not hold as freeholders; not as tenants for life, or tenants at will, or tenants on sufferance? Shall we not go on

THE HITCHIN DOCTORS, 1848

Viewed from left to right those represented are Watson Perks, Rickman Shillitoe, Frederick Hawkins, and Oswald Foster. The quack doctor, Mansell, can be seen walking on the extreme right

adding to our wealth? 'I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.' Do we not all of us hate the priests and loathe the lawyers for disturbing this pleasant dream of existence, and for saying to us, 'Thou fool!' Are they right, then, after all? Is it true that we are but 'strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers.' 'O Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions!'

Life is one long series of farewells, but what of the last farewell? Here at Hitchin shall we not all of us experience the anguish of that man whom Jesus loved, 'and he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions'? Our own goods and chattels may be few; but in Hitchin itself we have a goodly inheritance, and it will be hard, at the end, to leave it all behind. Think of it! 'The place thereof shall know us no more.' No more to stroll down Bancroft in the light of the sun, or sit at ease in its enchanting gardens. No more to idle upon Windmill Hill, and hearken to St. Mary's bells. No more in high summer to wander up Gray's Lane, lie in the lavender, and watch the heavenly white butterflies flitting over the heavenly blue. No more to lean out of Hobley's windows of a Tuesday and look down upon the hustling, quarrelling, chaffering, reeking crowd of countrymen, higglers, hawkers, thieves, loafers and vagabonds in Hitchin Market. No more to go softly at nightfall into the Trinity Chapel, sit by Thomas Abbot's tomb and let the dew of evensong descend upon one's soul.

Well, if we must sigh when we come to make our wills, and sigh still more when we 'close our last day,' let us at least be honest and remember our benefits. We shall have dwelt in a pleasant place and we shall have had our hour. Happy if we can say, out of a clear conscience, that as life-tenants we have not committed waste. Blessed if we can go on to say that we have improved our inheritance, and are able to hand down to our children a maxim of good citizenship which we strove in our time to keep: 'God has lent us the earth for our life. It is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who are to come after us, and whose names are already written in the book of creation, as to us. We have no right by anything we do or neglect to deprive them of what it was in our power to bequeath.'

PLACE-NAMES, FIELD-NAMES & SURNAMES (i)

PLACE-NAMES

I

IT is customary to begin the history of a place with a dissertation upon its name. Here the perplexed author has left that difficult matter over until the last, that he might take more time to consider and make up his own mind. But who would not hesitate over the derivation of Hitchin when all the Hertfordshire historians and all the doctors of philology have disagreed? Just listen, if you will, to some of their conclusions, for in the multitude of counsellors there is safety if not certainty, and in this hazardous domain of place-name study—littered with the bones of so many early explorers—the golden rule is 'safety first.'

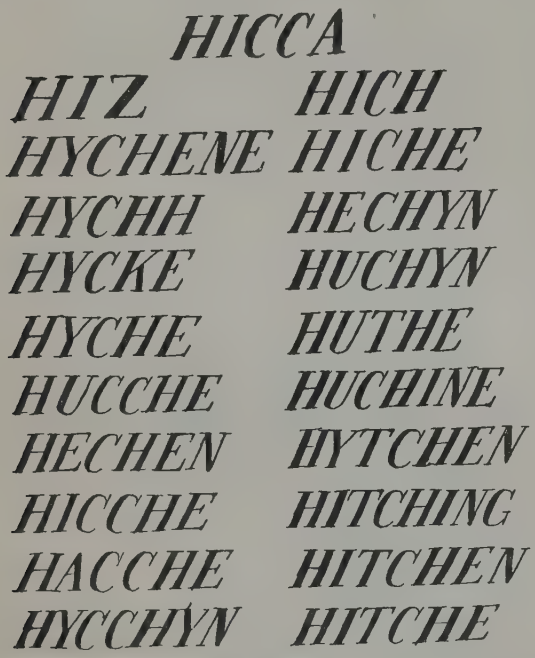
'Hitchin, or Hichine,' says John Norden, our first Hertfordshire historian, 1598, 'is more rightly called Hitch End because it lieth at the end of a famous wood called Hitch (ii), of which also the Hitch, called Hitch haulfe hundred, taketh name, and not of the towne which is *quasi terminus* the utter edge or end of that woode, though time have extinguished that part of the wood which laie towardes the towne. It cannot,' he argues, 'be Hitch-ing which soundeth *de pratis* unless it bee in that sence as *Lucu* is a thick wood *de lucendo* of yelding light being altogether darke. So Hitch-inge of meadow ground because it hath no meadowe, and yet it standeth in a valley between the hils' (6. 3). Chauncy, writing a hundred years later, is not disposed to argue the point with Norden or any other man. The town, he says

i. Acknowledgments are due to Professor Allen Mawer, Hon. Sec. and Director of the English Place-Name Society, Professor Eilert Ekwall of Lund, Sweden, and Professor R. E. Zachrisson of Uppsala, Sweden, for generously assisting in this chapter.

ii. Professor Ekwall, in his *English River Names*, 1928, p. 197, says: 'There are to my knowledge no other references to this wood, and probably Norden for some reason mixes Hitchin up with Wych Wood (O.E. Hwiccawudu).' Here the learned professor, and not Norden, is in error. Hitch Wood, covering 178 acres, is a dominating feature on all our maps, and is preserved only too well by a stern race of gamekeepers.

categorically, ' was called Hiz from the name of the river that passes through it ' (8. 2. 161).

Salmon, 1728, does not leap at this easy explanation: ' It is written in Domesday Hiz. Doubtless the name was Hitch. But if we are to suppose a Norman dictating the Syllable to the Clerk with an H at Beginning and another in the End we may allow it to come as near the Truth as that Record generally is. It was called in the Time of the Saxons *Hicce* and in the Charter



THE VARIOUS FORMS OF HITCHIN AS A PLACE-NAME

of Donation to Earl Harold from Edward the Confessor *Hitche*. It seems to have its Name from a neighbouring Wood called Hitch, which once reached to the town, built at the Wood End. It may be asked why might not the Wood be named from the Town as well as the Town from the Wood? There was a wood before there was a Town.' Yet when he thinks it over again, Salmon is not quite content with old Norden's surmise: ' It

may be from the Turn that the Brooke makes near the Priory, and so derived from *Ichen*, in British an Elbow or Horn, since the country of the Iceni hath been thought denominated from thence' (10. 148, 160). Clutterbuck, 1815–1827, thinks that 'the termination "in" has been added since the Norman Conquest, and seems to resemble the "ac" in Baudac (Baldock), the "ace" in Stigenace (Stevenage), the "ache" in Langenache (Lannock) and the "hege" in Hegestanestone (Hexton)' (31. 3. 12). Cussans, 1870, strikes a new and much more promising vein. 'There can be little doubt,' he says, 'that there were several hamlets lying in close proximity, each known by the name of Hicche (with some distinguishing affix), which collectively would be called the Hicches or, according to the ancient manner of forming the plural, the Hicchen, as we now speak of the Pelhams in the hundred of Edwinstree and the Roothings in Essex' (50. 2. 33).

The first expert to invade our region was the Rev. H. Hall, but his work, *The Names of Places in Hertfordshire*, was not the work of an intrepid pioneer. In his mild opinion the name signified 'the meadow watered by the Hitz . . . for a meadow when free from trees was called "ing"' (iii). Frederic Seebohm, 1883, was convinced that Hiz is a genuine river-name and drew attention to the analogous 'change of Hisseburn or Icenanburn into Itchen River' (Hants), and of 'aet Iceburn into Ticeburn and Titchbourne' (55. 160). Then in 1904 Seebohm's friend, Professor W. W. Skeat, made a foray into these parts, and took back to Cambridge the trophies that he won. 'We find,' he reports later in *The Place Names of Hertfordshire*, p. 62, '*hundred de Hiz* (= Hits), D.B. 2, R.B. *Hiche* (A.D. 1210); H.R. *Hitche* (for Hicche); Index to Charters, *Hiche* (A.D. 1303); Hicchen (1535); *Hechyn* (1541); F.A. *man' de Hicchyn* (1346). Kemble has *Hicche* as a nominative case in *Cod. Dipl.* IV, 156, in a charter dated 1062. All these are related to the A.S. personal name *Hicca* occurring in 'Hiccan-thorn.'

iii. The form *Hitching* does not appear till about 1450, and one need not seriously consider it. The view of the old school, Kemble, Stubbs, Green and Canon Taylor, was that names ending in -ing were to be interpreted as plural patronymics, giving evidence of clan settlement. But in the light of modern research some modifications are necessary. See the *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1911, p. 825, where Dr. Bradley argues that the suffix is the normal modern English Phonetic descendant of the Old Norse *eng*, and means not 'meadow' but 'streams.' See also the monograph by Professor Ekwall on *English Place Names in -ing*, 1923, *passim*, and particularly p. 123.

BANCROFT, LOOKING NORTH-EAST

N.B.—The house where the *English Village Community* was written is in the centre of the picture

Birch, Cart. Saxon, No. 1252 (iv). We also find *Hicca*, apparently as a genitive plural, in a list of territorial names, Birch, Cart. Saxon, 1. 414. This suggests a nominative singular *Hicc*, plural *Hiccas*, but neither of these occurs. The D.B. form *Hiz* pronounced *Hits*, just as the Old Norman *Fiz* was pronounced *Fits*, is due to an imperfect representation of *ch* (as in church), the sound of the late A.S. *c* before *e* or *i*, as if *Hicca* had become *Hicce* (a form not found); just as *wicca* became *wicche* and is now *witch*. The final *n* in *Hitchin* is not easy to explain. It may be due to the genitive case *Hiccan*, as if it meant "Hicca's place," but the survival of such a final *n* is remarkable, and such an explanation is not wholly satisfactory. All we can say is that the name "Hitchin" is probably related in some way to the personal name *Hicca*.'

Before he quits the field he has a Parthian shot at Seebohm and the other defenders of the river theory: 'I will here make bold to remark that the river-name Hiz seems to be somewhat comical. It has all the air of having been invented in comparatively modern times by someone who had got hold of the Domesday form *Hiz* for Hitchin and did not know how it was pronounced' (v).

II

Meantime another champion had entered the field, one who knew not Hicca alias Hicc, or did not wish to know him. For the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Rev. A. C. Yorke, Rector of Fowlmere, Cambs, had been at work upon the *Antonine Itinerary*, that official record of the Roman Imperial Intelligence Department which dates from about A.D. 180 and which for centuries has been the despair of antiquaries. After years of wandering up and down Icknield Way and Ashwell Street and Old Walden Way, and after months of measuring the Roman and English mileage from Wilbury Hill Camp and Ravensburg Castle and Arbury Banks and Braughing to those military stations on the Itinerary that were already identified, the learned Rector stumbled on the truth. 'Icini,' he shouted to his wife, 'Icini is Hitchin.' As he kept on shouting, she made sure that he

iv. 'I do not agree,' writes Professor Zachrisson; 'in Hiccan-thorn I take the first element to be O.E. *hice*, "titmouse."'

v. With this one may compare the dictum of Professor Zachrisson that 'the name *Hiz* may be due to a comparatively recent revival of the O.Fr. forms' (927. 1. 98).

had gone mad, and called in a doctor. But, when the doctor (himself of considerable renown as an antiquary in his county) heard the joyful news, he also went raving mad. 'Icini is Hitchin.' The enigma of that station solved, all the rest fell into line; the puzzling deviations were explained; the distances fitted like a glove. In due time the whole brilliant argument, 72 pages in print, was unfolded before the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, to the satisfaction of Professor Skeat and the others whose hearts burned within them as they listened to the solution of a problem that had so long vexed the minds of men (919).

Though it was not vital to the argument, the rector took pains to show the connection between the military station *Icini*, which he had identified as Hitchin, and the Iceni tribe; and this he supported, at least to his own satisfaction, by evidence of the early pronunciation of the letter *c* before *e* and *i* in order to establish the philological kinship of *Icini*, *Iceni* and *Hitche*, and by 'the strong probability of the Iceni tribe advancing beyond East Anglian limits to this Hertfordshire frontier.' How else, he urged, could you explain the chain of fortifications about Hitchin fronting east? 'Here at Wilbury we stand within a fortress almost of the first class. At Harborough Banks, near Ashwell, is another considerable camp. At Limloe Hill, near Litlington, is another. At Melbourne, where the road sends off a branch to Walden and the Trinobantian *oppida*, is a camp (now nearly levelled by the plough) once outlined with a rampart some 200 yards square, which may date from the time of Ostorius Scapula's operations. To the left we catch the glint of spears and breastplates at Orwell. Farther on, at Grantchester the Roman trumpets bray out a summons to parade; and an answering reveille sounds from Shelford. And away yonder, where the Gog-Magog Hills screen the horizon, the white escarpments of Vandlebury twinkle with flashing spear and casque. Save in the wild and indomitable north, there is hardly a spot in Britain so gripped in the " mailed fist " of Rome as this " wedge " of land claimed by the great Iceni.'

If one is not persuaded, one is at least dazzled by the rector's thesis. Why grope after any further solution? Yet James B. Johnston, compiling his *Place Names of England and Wales* in 1915, would appear not to have heard of A. C. Yorke: 'The name can only mean Hicca's place. Had the " in " been early, it would probably have represented an old locative (at the place,

etc.), but it seems quite late. The river on which it stands, formerly the Hitche, seems to have been re-christened Hiz after Domesday.'

With the founding of the English Place-Name Society in 1923 a still more careful investigation was assured, and though the Hertfordshire volume is not printed as we write, we have some *obiter dicta* of Professor Ekwall on p. 22 of the *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names* printed in 1924. 'It is doubtful,' he observes, 'how far Old English tribal names such as Gifle, Hicce in the tribal hidage represent old British names. Gifle is more probably derived from the river-name (now the) Ivel and the Hicce whose name is preserved in Hitchin may have got the name from the river Hiz. Both the river-names are very likely British.' In his own monograph, *English River Names*, 1928, p. 197, he carries the inquiry a stage farther: '*Hitchin: Hicca* (gen. plur.) 7th (C. 1000) Trib. Hid.; ? *ad Hiccam* (for *-um*) 944–6 (C. 1250) B.C.S. 812; *Hicche* 1062 (12th) K.C.D. 813; *Hiz* 1086 D.B.; *Hiche* 1197–8 F.F.; *Hich'* 1275 R.H.; *Hiche, Hich'* 1278 *Ass* 323. If *Hiz* is an old stream-name, it would be easily explained from Welsh *sych* "dry" (with *h-* for *s-*; cf. Welsh *Hafren* from *Sabrina*). *Sych* is common in stream-names, as Sychffrwd, Sychnant. But so long as no early examples of the name have been found it is more probable that it is a back formation from Hitchin. The etymology of the latter must then remain obscure, except in so far as it is the dative plural of the tribal name O.E. *Hicce*'. In correspondence between myself and Professor Ekwall since the printing of his book he has been good enough to explain why he reads *Hiccum* for *Hiccam*. 'My reason is that *Hiccam* (with *a*) cannot be the source of Hitchin. The starting-point for Hitchin I take to be the O.E. dative plural *Hiccum*, which became early M.E. *Hichen* in the same way as O.E. *Cotum* became M.E. *Coten* (1292), now Coton, or O.E. *flēotum* gave *Flitten* c. 1200 (now Flitton, Beds). The O.E. form of the folk-name would be *Hicce* (with palatal *c*), but we do not know what *Hicce* is derived from. It might possibly be a man's name *Hicc*'.

'No,' says Professor Zachrisson, 'it is *not* possible. A personal name Hicc is out of the question. And besides early tribal names are never formed from personal names. I take Hitchin to be etymologically identical with Hicca, Wicca, Huta for Huca in the Tribal Hidage, and I look upon Hitchin as the

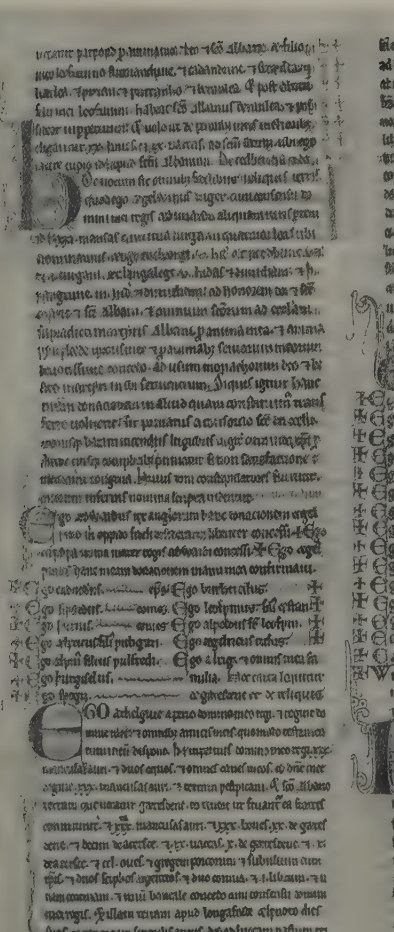
original home of the Hwiccas, who are likewise identical with the Hicca, Wicca in the Tribal Hidage. The best proof of this is that Wych-wood occurs as Hwicce-wudu in Birch 432, but as Huchewode in Domesday Book (vi). The tribe was probably named after the river, whose original name in this case must have been Hwicc(e), later Hicce and Huche. I am inclined to think that the ultimate base is a Keltic *Wic* as in Wytch Farm, Devon (O.N. *wicum*, streams, C.S. 910; cf. also *Wicwona*, C.S. 125, now Wickhamford, Worc.). I may add that in O.E. " h " was often prefixed to foreign words ' (932).

III

For my own part, much as I covet the Iceni connection, I am numbered of the tribe of Hicca. I feel that one should follow one's historical instinct and the prevailing law of place-name origins, and look for the man who gave his name to the place. If only the figure of the old chieftain would loom miraculously for one moment through the mists of time! If only one could peer at him over the rim of his shield and say, ' Thou art the man '! How many years now have I hunted him up and down the Icknield Way and blown my horn for him how often on Lilley Hoo? How many false shadows have I pursued? There were the Hwicce of the lower Severn valley whom the Mercians had swallowed up not long before King Offa came to Hitchin. There was that Haecci who signed as a witness to one of Cadwalla's charters in 696 (Birch, C.S. 89). There was that Haecga who in 765 signed along with King Offa as one of nineteen witnesses to a grant by Aldnuulf of lands at Stanmer, Lindfield and Burleigh in the county of Sussex (Birch, C.S. 197). And there was that Hycga who gave his name to Hycga's island (now Higney) by Sawtry Fen (Cambs Antiq. Soc., No. XLIV, p. 325).

But I did at last come nearer to my quarry. It was in the will of Æthelgifu, the evil genius, and some say the mistress, of her own son-in-law, the young King Eadwig, who was crowned in A.D. 956. Every reader of Anglo-Saxon history remembers how Eadwig abandoned his endless coronation banquet for the more congenial society of his Queen, and was found by Dunstan in Æthelgifu's bower ' in very private and familiar conversation '

vi. The Professor finds confirmation of his view in that Hitchin appears as Huche and Huchine in some early charters.



THE WILL OF AETHELGIFU

From B.M., Cotton MS., Nero, D. 1, f. 152

with the Crown of England tumbling on the floor. Unforgettable, too, is the stormy scene that ensued, in the course of which Dunstan *increpitavit mulierum ineptias* (for which the vixen afterwards sought to put out his eyes), and then clapped the crown on to the King's head and dragged him back to his infuriated and inebriated nobles. There has been quite a battle of the books over the character of Æthelgifu and over the vexed question whether her daughter was really married to the King, but we are concerned here only with her will, which has also been the subject of historical inquiry (vii). One thing at least is clear from this precious document which was witnessed by the King, who received ' two horses and all my dogs,' Archbishop Oda, nine bishops, and nine ealdormen, namely that Æthelgifu was a Hertfordshire woman. The lands at Offley, Welwyn, Munden, Braughing and Standon, which she has to dispose of, are all in the neighbourhood of Hitchin, and it is Hitchin she thinks of first of all: ' I leave that land of mine at Longaforde (Langford, Beds) to Ælfnoth for his life upon condition that he gives every year to Hicca (*ut singulis annis det ad Hiccam*) three days' provisions (Birch, C.S. No. 812).

There in the heart of the tenth century you touch solid ground. There is the tribe of Hicca already settled in these parts, hunting and hungry and wanting food. Even so one does not cry *Eureka*. One has still to discover the chieftain who gave his name and fame to the tribe. And suppose we did discover Hicc leaning upon his spear on the outskirts of the town; suppose we asked him where he got his name, what would he say? Would he point to the primeval forest or to the purling stream? And suppose we asked the stream, should we have any clearer answer? If the Hiz has altered its course times out of mind (viii), it may also have altered its name. For my own part, though it is my bounden duty as the historian of this parish to find out the meaning of its name, I am not troubled that it still eludes me; rather the

vii. In E. W. Robertson's *Historical Essays*, p. 201, there is an able analysis of the eleventh-century copy of this will (Cotton MS., Nero D. i. f. 152), which proves pretty conclusively that in spite of difficulties about dates, and later interpolations in the copy here reproduced, it is the will of Eadwig's mother-in-law and not of that other Æthelgifu who was Edmund's queen.

viii. There is an interesting paper by J. E. Little, M.A., in the *Herts Express* for June 11, 1927, tracing for a distance of three miles, from Charlton across the Offley Road to Old Wellbury and on to Tingley Wood, the dry bed of a river which he half ventures to call the Old Hiz, and which in its day was evidently a more important stream than the one now rising at Well-head.

reverse. I am proud to dwell in a place which had its beginnings before history was born.

IV

Of the Hitchin hamlets we can write less subjunctively, for their names are regular in form and rise naturally out of the grouping and development of this ancient community. For example, Charlton, O.E. *ceorla tun*, signifies the settlement of a group of ceorls or freemen preserving a difficult and declining independence in the midst of those bondmen and villeins who were the mere chattels of Harold in his great manor of Hiz (above, Vol. I, pp. 27–8) (ix). That hamlet is on the south of Hitchin. On the north stands Walsworth, alias Walso, Walser, Waltersworth, Waltonsworth—one of those many Walsworths, Walworths, Waltons and Walcotes scattered up and down the land, which evidence the survival of small groups of *wealas*, i.e. foreigners or Britons, and indicate that they were not compelled to live as serfs on the estates of their conquerors, but had separate hamlets and homesteads of their own (x) (927. 1. 18). Of the two remaining hamlets Preston, derived from the genitive plural of O.E. *preost*, a priest, may either signify a tun, where there was a resident priest, which was in early days a sufficiently uncommon feature to be specially characterized, or a community of priests dwelling beside the church afterwards formed into the preceptory of the Knights Templars, or an outlying portion of those five hides

ix. 'The ceorl,' says Professor Stenton, 'was the free, but not noble landholder, the man to whom in Mercia and Wessex the wergild of 200 shillings belonged. It is to him the laws refer when they are expressed in general terms, and it was on him that the chief fiscal burdens of our English society fell. Even in the seventh century he can be seen living with his fellows in agricultural communities which have no obvious lord. Thus in the Laws of Ine, S. 42, it is written: "If ceorls have common meadow or other share-land to enclose, and some have enclosed their share, others not, and beasts eat their common crops or grass, let him go whose is the opening and make amends for the damage done to those who have enclosed their shares, and let them claim from those who own the beasts such amends as are proper"' (Introduction to *Survey of E.P.N.*, pp. 41–2). 'That so few of the many Charltons were in the possession of freemen in Domesday is a measure of the decline of freedom since the days of the Saxon Conquest' (Mawer, *Place-Names and History*, p. 28).

x. Here, again, Professor Zachrisson holds a different view: 'Many or most Waltons and Walcotes,' he says, 'are to be derived from O.E. *weall*, "wall," and point to the existence of Roman remains' (Zachrisson, *Romans, Kelts and Saxons*, 41).

CHARLTON MILL, 1848

From a painting by Samuel Lucas

belonging to the church at Hitchin that King Offa founded (Vol. I, p. 69); whilst Langley = Long lea speaks for itself (xi).

Over the river-names of our parish there is more uncertainty. For example, the *Oughton*, which rises at Oughton Head and after a course of two miles joins the Hiz at Rowley's Mill, is known in its earliest form as *Alton*, and may, as Professor Ekwall suggests, be a back-formation and signify 'the old tun'—a supposition which is supported by the number of ancient remains found in that part of the parish; or there may be a still earlier form *Æwiell-tun*, O.E. town or farm by the river-spring. The *Purwell*, which rises in Ippollitts parish and runs by Nine Springs to Purwell Mill and so through Walsworth to join the Hiz at Grove Mill, is known in its earlier forms as Pirriwell, Pirral, Pearl and Pirre. The name is evidently echoic in origin and may be related to the English dialect word *prill*, 'a small stream of running water,' and more distantly perhaps to the Norwegian *puldra*, 'to gush,' and *pulla*, 'to bubble,' and with the Swedish *porla*, *pollra*, 'to murmur, to purl' (xii) (931. 333). Passing along the eastern borders of our parish, this brook has given a riparian name to Riddy Lane, O.E. *rithig*, 'a small stream,' and to Riddy Shott, O.E. *sceat*, 'nook, corner, point,' or Middle Dutch *schot*, 'enclosure,' the field in which I have my humble habitation. On the opposite point of the parish we have another place-name, Burford Ray, the Ray in which shows an interesting development from O.E. *ēa*, 'river,' which is found again in the river Rhee at Ashwell.

V

Now let us come back into the town and saunter about the streets. Here, again, are some interesting names, though some of the best have slipped out of all but historical memory. Fortunately we retain Bucklersbury, though the trade of the smiths and the armourers is no longer practised in that quarter. Tilehouse,

xi. The record of Langley hamlet in Domesday Book is as follows: 'Osbert holds one hide & a half of Geoffrey (de Bech) in Langelei. There is land for 3 ploughs. There is one there and there might be two more. There are two villeins and four cottagers. There is one bondman. Meadow for one ox. Pannage for 150 hogs. It is worth 30 shillings; when received 25 shillings; in King Edward's time 30 shillings. Suuen, a vassal of Earl Harold's, held this land & might sell it.'

xii. 'If the form Pirriwell quoted by you is old,' comments Professor Ekwall, and it certainly is found as far back as 1400, 'the name looks more like a compound with O.E. *pirge*, *pyrige*, "a pear-tree," as first element.'

formerly Tylers Street, into which Bucklersbury runs, reminds us of a once-famous kiln whose ridge tiles and pantiles and plain tiles kept the wind and rain off the heads of our forefathers. It stood at the top of the street where No. 35 now stands. From Tylers Street you had a short cut into Nun's Close through Pigs Alley, a good honest name which the snobbishness of our Victorians changed into Queen's Head Passage. From Nun's Close you could either go westward up Pie Crust Alley to Gray's Lane or right-handed into the market down another alley originally called Corpus Alley, later Cod-piece Alley, and still later Quakers' Alley and Post Office Alley, now West Alley; or you could go straight on by a pleasant farmstead to meet the Pound in the narrow ten-foot lane called Pound Lane, formerly Pulters Lane, and later and now, since its widening, known as Brand Street.

Away to your left were Butts Close, West Mill and the Lammas fields. In front were the Fishpond closes, with their little colony of kingfishers and nightingales. To your right, at the bottom of the lane, was Cock Street, so called after its medieval and cock-fighting inn, and now meaninglessly styled High Street. From Cock Street, turning leftward, you passed by the Brotherhood or Gildhouse into Gilden Square, a name now forgotten in Golden Square. Here, until the Reformation, stood the ancient market cross; and here from the Reformation until the twentieth century was the Pig Market. From this point of vantage, with the Trooper's Arms at your back and the Church House and the Crown upon your right, you looked down the noble length of Bancroft, that street of many splendours, which was in its beginning Benecroft, a mere enclosure within the open fields of Hitchin, set apart and hedged about for the cultivation of beans, with which you may compare Maydencroft = Meadowcroft, Ryecroft and Honey-croft. Right down to Queen Bess's day the spelling is still Benecroft; and it is clear that the cultivation was on a large scale, for in a survey of the manor taken in 1557 the market itself is referred to as the ' bean market ' (125).

From Bancroft, the northern end of which was known as Silver Street, you made your way by Portmill Lane (for there was no Hermitage Road until 1874) into Dead Street, leaving the mill (which until 1852 stood in the Grange garden) on your left and the Girls' Charity School, which, in its last decay as a cottage, survived to 1927, on your right. Of Dead Street, that grim

BANCROFT: LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

From a painting by Harry Hine, 1895

reminder of the Black Death, we have already written (Vol. I, p. 42). Sufficient here to say that the inhabitants, afraid to walk any longer in this valley of the shadow of death, altered the name to Back Street about 1660, and once again, about 1840, to Queen Street. Away to your left, as you stood in the street, ran the Walsworth Road, which after 1850 was to serve the station also. In front towered Rawlings Hill, now Windmill Hill, and along its southern slopes spread those orchards and terraced gardens which you can see depicted in Drapentier's plan of the town (Vol. I, facing p. 17). Through these gardens, again, ran Hollow Lane, in more religious days called Hallow Lane and Holy Lane and Holie Waye, which in coaching days was known as Kershaw's Hill and was the only way out of the town to Stevenage.

Turning right along Dead Street, you passed some of the oldest tenements in the town (xiii), and peered through fifteenth-century gateways into the squalid quarrelsome underworld of Chapman's Yard, Gascoigne's Yard and Barnard's Yard, those dens of iniquity referred to in *Crime and Punishment*, which came in time to be regarded as some of the worst slums in England and were cleared in 1926–8. At the southern end of the street you swung round to the right by the Bull House into Bridge Street, formerly known as Bull Street, and earlier still as Spittle Street from the Pest House or Hospital that stood there in the unhealthiest quarter of the town. And so past the Boot, the Jockey and the Anchor—all unlicensed now—and past that ancient house beside the river whose barge-boards, mocking at the shallow stream below, have alligators carved along them; past where the Maypole stood aforetime into Sun Street, which before the Sun rose in its strength to dispute the monopoly of the medieval Angel Inn was known as Angel Street, and before the Angel appeared was known as St. Mary's Street (xiv). And so into the Market Place—the very heart of Hitchin.

In that brief perambulation you have a glimpse of the old town as it had stood, content within its borders, since medieval times—dreaming of many things dead and gone, but not dreaming of things to come, or of the marvellous expansion of this modern age, or the addition of streets already too numerous to name.

xiii. Nos. 103–4 in this street, formerly one house, are pronounced to be of late fourteenth-century date in the *Inventory of the Monuments of Hertfordshire*, p. 125.

xiv. In two or three seventeenth-century deeds I have seen this street referred to as Weary-bones Street.

There are some isolated place-names it is our duty to refer to before bringing this section to an end. For example, there is Bury Field, in which Bury, derived from *byrig*, the dative case of *burh*, betokens one of those fortified manor-houses, or moated homesteads, so prevalent in Hertfordshire and Essex in Conquest and post-Conquest times. Burford, already named, is, of course, the Bury ford. Then there is Bearton hard by, which takes its name from O.E. *bere-tun*, literally ' barley farm,' but used in the Middle Ages in a special sense to denote ' a grange situated in an outlying part of a manor, where the lord's crop was stored ' (927. 2. 5).

On rising ground to the north stands a farm named Highover, from O.E. *ōfer*, ' a bank.' In name and in situation it may be compared with High Down, which stands on another eminence to the west of Hitchin. Skimpot is another place-name that calls for explanation. It is said to be a corruption of ' St. Mary's Pottery ' in the same way that Skimmery Hall was colloquial for St. Mary's Hall in Oxford (928. iii. 146). We certainly had a pottery in Hitchin. You may see examples of its work, to wit two brown glazed jugs, in the museum at St. Albans. Is Poynders End another relic of that craft? Very likely, for in its earlier forms it appears as Potters End, and there is Kiln Wood significantly near. But there is also a tantalizing brass in Ippollitts Church to one Poȳdre and his wife dated 1401. ' For my part,' says Professor Ekwall, ' I look upon it as a local form of " pinder," the officer of the manor having the duty of impounding stray beasts. This is from O.E. *pyndan*, and *y* sometimes gives *oi*, as in *Roydon* from *ryge-dun*.' To me,' says Professor Zachrisson, ' it looks much more like a corruption of Pointer, " a maker of lace," seeing that *nd* for *nt* is such a common Anglo-French feature ' (932).

Finally there is Hollane, otherwise called Hauland, Hullund and le Holland, on the eastern borders of our parish. This at first sight would seem to signify land in a hollow, or land on or near a hoe (cf. Plymouth Hoe), or ridge, O.E. *hol* or *hōh* respectively; but it is just possible that the suffix may be derived from O.N. *lundr*, which Reginald of Durham (Surtees Soc., ed. 275) renders *nemus paci donatum*, i.e. a grove dedicated to peace. Professors Mawer and Stenton suggest that ' this word *lundr* in Scandinavianized England must have been used with the same heathen religious associations that it had in Scandinavia itself '

THE BOOT INN

From a photograph by T. W. Latchmore, 1895

THE PLOUGH INN

From a painting by W. C. Alexander, 1898

(928. iii. 220). 'A grove dedicated to peace.' And there beside it, if we may follow our manor roll for 1471 (see Vol. I, p. 47), are the hinds bending under their sacks of corn, treading the footpath way down le Redye, across Bradybrigge, past the old pear-tree which gave its name to the Pirriwelle, and so on to Purwell Mill. If that be not its meaning it is indeed a pity, for it makes a gracious little oasis in the desert of the past.

FIELD-NAMES

'All I say is, you don't know your own lanes and woods and fields.'
—THOMAS HUGHES.

WE may as well admit the charge at once. The maker of it (better known as the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*) was acquainted with every field and furlong of our parish, and in his perambulations was always girding at the farmers for letting the old names go. By this time they have almost slipped from common use, though you may still chance to hear them from the lips of old labourers, or from historians who love to delve them out of innumerable deeds. It is a pity, for there is nothing more racy of the soil, nothing that brings back so well the homeliness and the loveliness of the English country-side. How good it is to see these field-names cropping up in unexpected places, sometimes even in the public records, and always like Chaucer's daisies fresh with dew. What a wholesome reminder that in all the vicissitudes of Church and State, in the fall of dynasties and in the clash of arms, Hodge must still lead his team afield in the morning and from the pastures at nightfall bring home the cows.

I have been collecting the field-names of my parish for over fifteen years. I have taken them first-hand from patriarchal ploughmen and white-haired shepherds; and second-hand from farm leases and estate maps, and third-hand from more than a thousand deeds. To their number there seems to be no end, for fields have an exasperating habit of changing their names four or five times over in the course of the centuries. All we can do here is to make a brief selection, and classify what we select. First of all there is that large class which follows the name of the owner. We have Vicar's Acre, Gilden Acre, Charley's Close, Gallon's Pasture, Welchman's Croft, Tristram's Havings, Kate's

Close. This last name, which probably refers to the Lady of our Manor who was also Henry VII's unfortunate first Queen, was in itself unfortunate. By the reign of Elizabeth it had degenerated into Cake's Close, and by that of Anne it had become Catt's Close; such is the forgetfulness of farmers and the carelessness of scribes.

Very often, however, it was not the legal owner, but the casual occupier, man, beast or bird, who gave his name to the field. Thus we have Fisher's Close, where Aaron Fisher, the Hitchin knife-grinder, used to pitch his caravan. You may see him at work in the illustration that fronts this page; but you cannot make out the lines painted on the front of his machine:—

> 'Aaron Fisher is my name;
> Hitchin, Hertfordshire, I came.
> When I'm dead, my grinding done,
> I hope you will employ my son.'

In Maydencroft manor we have Old Bobwell and Witches' Close. Elsewhere in the parish we have fields named Bird-bushes, Plover Shott, Herne (i.e. Heron) Shott, Rooks Nest, Partridge Pightle, Gwander's (i.e. Gander's) Piece and Kidney Hills. The earliest form of this last name, Kettenhoe, points to an O.E. *cytan-hō*, the hill frequented by a kite. Animal-names are not quite so numerous, but we have Fox-mere, Hart and Hind Shott, and Polecatts.

Then there are those fields which are styled after some natural or unnatural features, e.g. Gooseberry Bush Close, Eldern Bush Shott, Cistern Shott, Sallow-bush Field and Five-borrow Field. This last name commonly appears in deeds as Five Berry and Five Burgh field, though it was not so long since the five British barrows were ploughed in (xv).

Others are known by the names of their accustomed crops, e.g. Turnip Close, Saffron Close, Herbers, Wode (i.e. Woad) Field, Marygold Piece, Cokers (an apple orchard in Dead Street), Walnuts and Filberts. Others, in plenty, have been given reproachful names, because the soil was unkind and husbandmen

xv. In the autumn of 1859 a portion of the field was excavated for the purpose of getting chalk, when it was discovered that the ground in all directions contained human bones at a very little distance beneath the surface. In the majority of cases the skeletons were found entire, but no weapons of any kind were discovered. Few of the bodies seem to have been laid in the ground with any care; in most cases the greatest confusion prevailed (50. 2. 6).

HITCHIN MARKET: SHOWING AARON FISHER THE HITCHIN KNIFE-GRINDER

From a photograph by Thomas Bates Blow, about 1872

for all the sweat of their brow could raise no crops on them. Thus, Rawpightle, Hungry Hill, Stonydell, Deepholm, Sandy Corner, Drycloger, Beggarly Shott, Starve Acre, Long Gains, Lousydell, Nettle Dell, Bunkers Hill, Long Gutter, Ducklands, Hobnail Close, Snakes Piece, Froggdell, Haggy Moors, Fool's Acre, Suck-bread, Maggotts Croft, Hail Shott, and Windy Field. But Hellgates, the most abusive of them all, though I have traced it back in that form beyond the Civil Wars, may aforetime have been Hill-cote.

Then there are the fields which have been styled after their peculiar shapes. Of these we have Shoulder of Mutton Piece, Plum Pudding Close, Goose Pie Green, Pigeon Pie Close, Catts Head Close, Butchers Cleaver, and Gorbellied Acre, which last, in course of time, was blasphemously corrupted into God's-belly Acre. Again, there are the diminutives; the little fields with the little names, e.g. Wren's Park, Pinfold Park (which may also signify the pound), Cuckoo's Hat, Titmouse Close, Spratt Dell, Little Tickells and Little Toys.

There are names of love and lust—Sweeting's Valley, Love's Mead, Trull's Close and Hagdell Piece; names of war and echoes of wrongdoing—Hanging Close, Wrath Croft, Botelers Bane, Sheepskin Close, and Tatmore and Tutting Hill, i.e. the hill from which the watch was wont to be kept (xvi); names of eating and drinking—Alepath Furlong and Cheeseland Close; and names bestowed long since by Holy Church—Licence Close, Curfew Close, Bell-rope Piece, Pentecost Field and a field near Gosmore called Purgatory Field, where on the eve of All Saints' men are said to have assembled at midnight, one of them burning a large fork of straw, whilst the rest knelt in a circle and prayed for the souls of their departed friends. The popular idea was that the dead were released for that one night from the pains of purgatory, but only so long as the straw continued to burn.

The remaining field-names on my list I will set down in a schedule, and leave the student to derive and classify as he thinks best. Perhaps in subsequent editions of this work some of them may be thought worthy of fuller notice, and to that end I invite the co-operation of my readers, but of those only whose learning may be trusted. Meantime here is the schedule, in which each name appears in its most accredited form:—

xvi. It is connected with the verb *to tout*, which originally meant 'to look out.'

Broad Castors
Botany Bay
Dusty Clough
Sybaris
Mireland Shott
Cowscroft
Bishammes
Wrytches
Long Dedkin
Short Shadwell
Hunting Gate
Furzen Close
Nether Tooks
Wisebeard Close
Woolgore
Short Abwell
Friday Furlong
Ruffhill Bottom
Hurlocks Pitt
Freyda's Wyck
Hamser Mead
Spellbrooke Field
Carys Grove
Bowstock Hill
Lark Hedge
Stywar Croft
Nocking Acre
Hockles
Wratts
Peltoftes
Coolys
Maltman's Cotland
Fiddler's Grove
Bodge Mead
Conygrees
Sumpters
Long Stanell
Leech Croft
Pattens
Figdell Piece
Pitchhouse Close
Ringwell Cross
Lower Innings
Beldams Knap
Dolphins Slade
Kimberlow
Walcotts
Haddocks End

SURNAMES (i)

'*Quelque diversité d'herbes qu'il y ait, tout s'enveloppe sous le nom de salade. De mesme, sous la considération des noms, je m'en voys faire icy une galimafree de divers articles.*'—MONTAIGNE, *Essais*, i. 46.

I

WITH all respect to our motto, we must approach this difficult subject in an orderly way. It must be a plain salad. A mere hotch-pot or gallimaufry will not do. Fortunately the subject falls of itself into four main divisions; for, as Canon C. W. Bardsley and Professor Ernest Weekley have amply shown, surnames must be (i) personal, from a sire or ancestor, (ii) local, from place of origin or residence, (iii) occupative, from trade or office, (iv) a nickname, from bodily attributes, character, etc. (918*a*. 15–36; 924. 2).

First, then, let us study the hereditary names acquired by Hitchin men from the personal or Christian name of their fathers and their mothers. Bardsley, in his sub-divisions, has for No. 1 'the names that preceded and survived the Conquest.' Of these we could cite many. Ansell, for example, comes from the Germanic (or Teutonic) Anselm, and represents the Ansen, the divine race inhabiting Asgard, the Norse Olympus (925. 31).

i. My thanks are due to Professor Ernest Weekley, author of *The Romance of Names*, 1914, and *Surnames*, 1916, for revising the manuscript of this section of my work.

STAFFORD ALLEN

From a drawing by Samuel Lucas

Tusting is the French form of Thurstan, a favourite Norse name, and Tristram, a great family here since the thirteenth century, may take its name from the same source (925. 32). In Geary we have preserved the memory of Geri, the paladin, unless it is from the obsolete adjective *gery*, 'changeable' (John le Gery is in the Hundred Rolls, 1273). In Izzard there is a pale echo of the famous Celtic name Iseult (924. 79). Saunders may have his choice of a connection with Alexander the Great or with the horse-parsley which still bears his name (925. 188). Everett and Everard recall the Anglo-Saxon chief Eoforheard, but may also represent a nickname, *eofor-heafod*, i.e. 'boar-head' (925. 322).

Of Bardsley's second sub-division, 'names introduced or confirmed by the Normans,' we have in our Warrens, Drews, Paines, Harveys and Emerys some humble descendants of the families enrolled in Domesday Book. Our Pardoes remind us of the favourite oath name of the Normans, *par Dieu*. 'At every other word,' says Camden, 'they would swear *by God*.' Our Purdys, on the other hand, are from the French *pour Dieu* (925. 180, 182). Stafford Allen, the mild-looking Quaker whose portrait fronts this page, was nominally if not lineally descended from Alan Ferjeant, Count of Brittany, a turbulent, ambitious man who bore for his arms, not an umbrella, but three burning castles (918*a*. 48). Wilson, Willmott and Wilks may all look to William the Conqueror as their cognominal ancestor, in the same way that Codlin (earlier forms Quodling, Querdling, Querdelyon) may look to Cœur-de-Lion (917. 499). The name of Devorgoil, borne by the saintly lady of Hitchin Manor, was too difficult for adoption as a surname; but it was in common use as a Christian name for girls in the thirteenth century. The name Hitchin, though here, of course, chiefly of local origin, can just as well signify 'the son of Richard,' and at one time 'Hitchin' was nearly as familiar as 'Dick' (917. 40). In Hutchin, very prevalent here up to the sixteenth century, we have the diminutive of Hugh (925. 331). Hubbart and Hibbert are variants of Hubert, whilst Hobbs is a diminutive of Robert (924. 62). Rawlins proceeds from Ralph by way of the French form Raoul, and Ransom (which Ferguson derived from O.N. *ransamr*, 'piratical' or 'predatory') is more properly 'the son of Randolph' (918*a*. 636).

Bardsley's third classification is 'names from the Calendar of the Saints.' Here in this heathen part of Hertfordshire we

cannot pretend to many such hallowed names. But we have Mitchell, standing for the Archangel Michael; Perkins, Pirkis and Perks for St. Peter; Cobbett for St. Cuthbert; Catlin for St. Catherine; Griggs, a diminutive of St. Gregory; Mayhew, for St. Matthew; Lucas, for St. Luke; and Smirke, which is just possibly a corruption of St. Mark (925. 87).

Of ' names chosen from festivals and Holy days ' we can muster Tiffany, an old name for Epiphany; Pankhurst, which is Pentecost in strange disguise (924. 89); and Loveday, by which we are reminded of those days which used to be fixed for the arrangement of differences, when old sores were to be healed and long-standing accounts brought to a settlement (917. 63).

Then there are the ' patronymics formed from occupations.' To this class we can contribute Smithson, Clarkson, Grayson, i.e. the Grieve, or Reeve's son, and Kempson, the son of the ' kempe,' or soldier.

Of Bardsley's sixth division, ' Matronymics,' we can furnish examples in Tagg, and Annis, i.e. ' the son of Agnes '; Emmot, Emmett, and Empson, ' the son of Emma '; Margetson, ' the son of Margaret '; and Lettsom, ' the son of Lettice.' The last holder of this once fashionable name at Hitchin was a physician, who practised in the reign of George I. But he was not the doctor referred to by Bardsley, whose habit of signing his prescriptions ' I Lettsom ' occasioned this epigram:—

> ' When any patient calls in haste,
> I physics, bleeds and sweats 'em;
> If after that they choose to die,
> Why, what care I?
> I. Lettsom.'

' Names derived from Holy Scripture ' is Bardsley's seventhly and lastly; and in that class, if space allowed, we could show God's plenty, though some examples are not apparent at first sight. Thus Absolom, in Chaucer's day hight Absolon, by metathesis became Aspelon, whence our surname Asplin (925. 205). In Times we have, not very obviously, ' the son of Timothy.' Lest there should be any doubt about it, one holder of that name, afterwards a schoolmaster of this parish, was baptized Timothy Times. Our families of Samm and Dawson and Nicholls stand, of course, for Samuel, David and Nicholas.

It was pointed out by Bardsley long ago that our early Biblical surnames represent not so much the Church's Bible as the

Church's Calendar. 'There is not,' he says, 'a single name to betray any internal acquaintance with the Scriptures. Nor could there well be. An English Bible was unknown, and had there been one to consult, the reading powers of the nation were too limited for it to have been much used' (917. 99).

With the translation of the Bible at last into the vulgar tongue and the habitual reading of it in every parish church, a strange and exciting element was introduced into English nomenclature. It was as though a new world had been discovered, as rich and virgin as America or far Cathay. You can tell from a glance at our Elizabethan registers with what speed and intrepidity our forefathers went in and possessed the land, for the spoils of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha are littered on every page. It was too late to form surnames out of them, but in place of Tom, Dick and Harry you meet with high-sounding, mouth-filling font-names like Immanuel, Herodias, Zacchaeus, Zophanie, Damaris, Magdalene, Tobias, Abraham, Aquila, Beniah, Samson, Solomon, Rebecca, Dinah, Susanna and Judith. It is hardly needful to say that not all of them lived up to their Christian callings; and as for Dives Browne, he disappointed all his relations by leaving an estate of only £38.

By the time of the Civil War the Puritans had pillaged everything, and were actually inventing names out of those sad austerities which they inflicted upon themselves for the subjugation of their souls. Thus we have Prudence Pearles, Modesty Newman, Silence Hotfoot, Adored Tuffnail and Repentance Peacock (ii). Beyond these flights it was scarcely possible to go, and even before the Restoration a reaction had set in. Throughout the reigns of Charles and James II one marks a steady slump in Scripture names. From the dizzy heights of the Fifth Monarchists the soul of man came down into the dull, unimaginative plains of Dutch William and Farmer George; and the community of saints at Hitchin, where Obadiah Doubleday and Euphonia Bliss once wrestled with doubts and fears and sighed for the coming of King Jesus, declined into a race of shopkeepers, on whose signs, swinging to and fro in the windy streets, were inscribed such names as John Mildew and Sulley Dab.

ii. Throughout the Civil War Hertfordshire was Puritan almost to a man; and you cannot examine a single register or muster roll of the period without being reminded of that fact. Thus we have Wonderful Warwick of Cheshunt, Lamentation Caudle of Braughing, Mephibosheth Lamprey of Datchworth, and, best of all, that priceless fellow, Humiliation Scratcher of Ware.

II

Our second classification, it will be remembered, was 'local, from place of origin or residence.' Here, as Verstegan in his *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* long since showed, we have an important and instructive source of surnames: 'Now as men have always first given names unto places, so hath it afterwards grown usuall that men have taken their names from places.' Indeed, this was carried to such an extent in early days that you could map out the metes and bounds of your parish, and fill in its natural features, from the names in the Hundred Rolls and Lay Subsidy Rolls and Manor Rolls. Take just a few at random. Hugo de Cruce, i.e. Hugh of the Cross; Leticia de la lace (pool or stream); Adam atte styghle, i.e. at the stile; John atte brigg (bridge); John atte medwe (meadow); Robert atte brok (brook); Hugh atte hegg (hedge); Richard a Dene (wood); John of the Forde; Robert Okebank; John Pond; Lawrence Nash, i.e. atten ash; Gerrard Nokes, i.e. atten oakes; William Waterfall; Matilda Antrobus (Fr. *entre buis* = among the box trees); Thomas Bellows (of the Bell house). Richard de la Riviere, 1296, affords another admirable example, for you may trace the evolution of his name. Four years later he is styled Richard Riviere. In the next generation his son appears on the Rolls as Rivers. In the third generation the family name is Reeves.

Mark the names of those who strayed into Hitchin from the neighbouring villages and obtained a settlement here, e.g. Thomas Graveley, Luke Norton and John of Gaddesden. Mark also the names of those who came from farther afield: Coxall from Coggeshall; Beaver from Belvoir; Snooks from Sevenoaks; Wilshere from Wiltshire; and Radcliffe, whose ancestral home was by the red cliffs of Lancashire.

Above all, mark the influx from abroad by those who continued to wear in their surnames the badge of inferiority to the true-born Englishman. In the Lay Subsidy Rolls these are often listed separately under 'Names of persons keeping house not born within the Kingdom of England nor *indigena facta*,' i.e. naturalized. Thus we find Gilotus de Galeys (Wales); Thomas Irysshman; William le Norreys, i.e. the north-countryman, or possibly Norwegian (918*a*. 561); Richard Flemyng; Dennis (le *daneis*, the inhabitant of Denmark); Hanway from Hainault; John Gerneseye; Johan de Verdun; Nicholas Frenshman; Maylin

from Malines; Aris from Arras; Mansel (O.F. *mancel*, an inhabitant of Maine, or its capital Le Mans); Power (O.F. *Pohier*, a Picard); Gascoyne from Gascony; Cain from Caen; Janeway from Genoa; Pettengell from Portugal; James Erabie from Arabia; and William Jordan, who, if he had not dipped seven times in that river, had at any rate served in the Crusades (iii). Whatever drew them from their native lands: merchant-adventure, the hazard of war, the lure of love, the doom of outlawry, they came in shoals from oversea and added their brilliant hues to that coat of many colours which the 'true born' Englishman already wore. Surely Defoe had some justification for his insulting rhymes:—

> 'From this amphibious, ill-born mob began
> That vain ill-natured thing, the Englishman.
> The customs, surnames, languages and manners
> Of all these nations are their own explainers,
> Whose relics are so lasting and so strong
> They have left a shibboleth upon our tongue,
> By which with easy search you may distinguish,
> Your Roman—Saxon—Danish—Norman—English.'

III

We come now to our third section of 'names derived from trade or office.' And here we can but touch the fringe of a vast subject; for the occupations of to-day and the names that rise out of them are as nothing to the bewildering diversity and minute sub-division of crafts in medieval England (iv). In our rapid survey we must single out those trades that have prospered more than others in Hitchin town. First and foremost, of course, there is agriculture, an industry which has flourished on our soil and, incidentally, given us a rich harvest of names. Of the farm-hands the earliest recorded is the hine (le Hyne), from A.S. *hina*, a servant; and the name is hardly obsolete yet (v), though the Good-

iii. 'More likely,' notes Professor Weekley, 'the surname is derived from its use as a font-name, given for some religious reason, but not necessarily associated with Crusades.'

iv. Bardsley devotes 250 pages to these occupative names, and is always apologizing for his omissions (917. 172–422).

v. In parts of Yorkshire you may still hear the farm-labourer referred to as 'the hine.' The form 'hind,' which is frequently inflicted on me, is later in origin and the *d* is excrescent. Chaucer employs the word to denote not so

hines who sweated and 'swinked' here in the fifteenth century have left off being 'Good.' Almost as early met with is the swain (le sweyn), whose honest rusticity is somewhat disguised in our Swans and Swannells, though some of these may have tended swine, and others, long in the neck, may have been nicknamed after the swan, whilst the Swannells, who have been sign-painters in Hitchin for generations, may have taken their name from the Swan Inn, whose elegant sign, painted, no doubt, by them, swung over what is now the entrance to the Arcade.

JAMES SWANNELL

Then there are the names of the more skilled hands on the farm. Our Mathers were the mowers. Our Tailebushes (earlier form Taillebois), with their proud Norman name, once trimmed the hedges. Our Colliers were charcoal-burners. Our Hugh le Dycker and our Roger le Drayner show their own handiwork; as Mattock declares the tool he formerly used. Our Millwards

much a farm-hand as a man employed in husbandry; and there is a passage in an early poem, quoted in Percy's *Reliques*, which lends support to this view:—

'I am an hine;
And I do use to go to plough,
And earn my meat ere that I dine.'

were keepers of the mill, vigilant upholders of our Lord the King's monopoly in grinding, and down upon those who dared to use hand-mills of their own. Our Haywards (i.e. hedge-keepers) and Howards, our Sewards (i.e. Sow-herds), Cowards and Bullards watched over the cattle lest they strayed beyond the limits of commonable land (vi). Our Pindars and Poynders impounded those that strayed. Our Todhunters' (i.e. fox-hunters') duty was to exterminate the animal now so carefully preserved (924. 185). Our Reeves and Greeves and Baileys, and certainly our Adam le bayliff, 1296, were the little lords and masters of them all:—

> 'His lordes shepe, his nete, and his deirie,
> His swine, his hors, his store, and his pultrie,
> Were wholly in this reves governing.'

So, also, with that other staple industry of wool, which for centuries supported Hitchin as it supported England; for 'the ribs of all nations throughout the world,' as Matthew Paris observed, 'are kept warm by the fleeces of English wool.' Our Laners (Fr. *laine*, wool); our Carders and Kempsters, who combed it; our Fullers and Walkers and Tuckers, who trampled out the raw cloth in troughs of water; our Tosers and Towsers, who 'teased' the cloth with teasels to produce the nap (vii); our Tenters, who stretched it upon tenters to dry; our Wadmans (woad-man), Dyers and Listers (M.E. *litster*, a dyer), who dyed it; our Sharmans, Shermans and Shearmans, who put the last touches upon the manufactured cloth; our Sackers and Packers—all speak of the successive processes of that intricate occupation, and recall Langland's contemporary lines:—

> 'Cloth that cometh from the weaver is not comely to wear
> Till it be fulled under foot or in fulling stocks;
> Washen well with water, and with teasels cratched,
> Towked and teynted and under tailor's hands.'

Of the manufacture of leather, our next important industry, we have many surnominal examples. The skinner, the currier,

vi. But the Howards may also have their name occupatively from being 'hog-wards,' or personally from Hereward.

vii. The statute 4 Edw. IV, c. 1, expressly states 'that every fuller in his craft and occupation of fuller, rower, or tayseler of cloth, shall exercise and use taysels and no cards deceitfully impairing the same cloth.' For an able account of all the processes employed in turning wool into cloth the student may be commended to Salzman's *Medieval English Industries*, 1923 edn., pp. 194–244.

the tawer, i.e. he who dressed the lighter goat and kid skins and made them ready for the glover's use, the barker and the tanner are all found in our Rolls and Register books. But the Barkers, as Professor Weekley reminds us, 'have swallowed up the Anglo-Fr. *berquier*, a shepherd, Fr. *berger*, with the result that the Barkers outnumber the Tanners by three to one' (924. 150):—

> '"What craftsman are you?" said our King,
> "I pray you, tell me now."
> "I am a barker," quoth the tanner;
> "What craftsman art thou?"'
>
> *Edward IV and the Tanner of Tamworth.*

Of butchers we can cite a few: Stephen Killeboef, Roger Carnifice, Ralf Bocher—all of the thirteenth century. Hugo le Draper, Robert le Spicer, William le Parmenter (i.e. tailor), Geoffrey Cissore (also a tailor), Richard le pellipar (i.e. furrier), Reginald le Capper, Roger Fruitore, John le tenecar (i.e. tinker), Henry Pedder (i.e. pedlar), Robert Tegulator (i.e. tiler), Lawrence Potter, Simon Leaper (i.e. fish-basket maker), Nicholas le Napper (viii), Thomas Netter, the net maker, Walter le Shovelere, Richard le Tippere, who made the tips for the long-bows, Martin Fewster, later Foster (i.e. maker of wooden saddle-frames), and John Firion are all found as Hitchin tradesmen in the fourteenth century.

The surname Tapster, 1599, reminds one that the ale-houses of Shakespearean and pre-Shakespearean days were kept by women, or ale-wives. Probably Thomas Pothouse, who also appears in the records of that period, was merely a frequenter. Ralph Pewter and Elisha Tankard, who follows him on a Lay Subsidy Roll of 1296, were respectively a worker in lead and tin and a scion of the noble house of Tancred.

Turning to matters of religion, we have Peter Priest, Robert Vicar and Adam le Chanter, and amongst them we may place Thomas le Palmere, Thomas Scriptor, Alfred Alphabet, John Pater Noster, the maker of rosaries, and William Curfew, probably a bellringer. Medicine is represented by Simon le Surigien as early as 1320, by innumerable Leeches and Barbers, i.e. barber-surgeons, and by Thomas Borage, 1519, who may be looked

viii. Napper, Napier. 'Napier of Merchiston,' as Professor Weekley remarks, 'had the motto *n'a pier*, has no equal,' and described himself on title-pages as the Nonpareil, but his ancestor was a servant who looked after the napery or table linen (924. 6).

upon as a seller of herbs. Music is represented by Mynstrelle, Piper, Tabor and Fidler. For eight generations we had Crowders, i.e. players on the six-stringed crowd or violin, and they kept to their profession. The last of his race is marked 'musician' in the Register book. One of them added to the family orchestra by marrying a Sacbut from the neighbouring parish of Norton.

Then there was the great profession of arms, which has left its marks even in this peaceful parish. Walter Miles, 1296, speaks for himself. So does Robert le Bowman, 1365. As for the Baliols, they took their name from the O.F. word *Bailleul*, meaning fort or bailey (925. 286). The Creaseys, though they claim to have distinguished themselves at the Battle of Creçy, are more likely to have brought from Kersey in Suffolk the secret of making the Kersey cloth (918*a*. 215; 924. 212). The Armours, though they have dropped a syllable, were formerly armourers. The Rutters (Fr. *routier*) were either mercenary soldiers or players on the rote (924. 160). The Hoblers, by the tenure of their lands, were obliged to maintain a hobby or nag for the service of their lord (916. 159). The Jenners (engineers) were the military officers who worked the catapults (918*a*. 429). The Kempes were champions or soldiers of uncommon strength. Last of all let us recall that champion of the Civil War, Batalion Shotbolt who, when the fighting was done, married a Conquest and settled down as steward of Hitchin Manor.

If only families would stick to their hereditary jobs, how simple and befitting it would be. As it is, these occupative names, serving other and sometimes baser uses, are exasperating and meaningless. How could a Bishop with any sort of soul become scavenger for the town of Hitchin, or those champions the Kempes turn schoolmasters, or Robert Spearpoint sink into a Quaker! And here in 1784 is Edward Tayler, begging 'to acquaint the Publick that he has given great satisfaction in the town of Hitchin, and to the nobility in that neighbourhood in the business of Cutting Corns and Toe-Nails.' It is enough to make the Master and Wardens of the gild of Master Tailors turn in their graves!

Perhaps it makes the occasional aptness of the unoccupative names all the more pleasing. For example, Sir Ralph Radcliffe in 1738 had a wagoner named Alehorn, of whom the steward used to say that he could never drive so straight and sure as when he had had a skinful. The same gentleman had a parlour-maid with the perfect name of Susan Sugars, and a serving-maid called

Tabitha Newton, who was always put in charge of the cats when her master went to take the waters at Bath. In the paymaster's list of the Hitchin Volunteers in the following century there is a private who bears the name of Bombproof, and another the name of Deadman. These, however, are almost nicknames, and may serve to introduce the reader to our final section.

IV

For his study on nicknames Bardsley lays down three main and eight subsidiary divisions (917. 423–514), but we must content ourselves with less. First of all let us take the names arising out of physical peculiarities. These more or less explain themselves: Megre, Smale (small), Giant (one of whom added to his stature with the font-name Alexander), Collop (a lump of fat; one of our Hitchin Collops was a poet [see Vol. I, p. 209], and another bore the name of Candlewick Collop), Foot, Barefoot (who may have undergone a public penance), Puddifoot (i.e. stumpy foot), Duckfoot (i.e. flatfooted), Lightfoot and Golightly; Blundell, Fairfax, Fairbeard, all betokening light complexion or hair; Oneye (One eye), Gernoun, noteworthy for his 'whiskers,' O.F. *gernon* = moustache, and Macmillan, i.e. son of the bald gilly (925. 239). Allbone and Albone, though apparently of this class, are either local from St. Albans, or from the font-name Alban. Walter Wykewounde, 1323, evidently bore the marks of one who had been 'badly wounded.'

Secondly, there are the nicknames derived from resemblances to 'the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth'—an innumerable class because the oddities and foibles of mankind are so admirably exemplified and caricatured in the animal creation. Of fish, in this inland county, we have netted no great quantity. But the registers supply us with Dab, Pike, Whiting, Crabb and Salmon (ix), though here again it behoves one to be careful, for Whiting may also come from A.S., son of Hwita, i.e. white, and Salmon from Solomon. We have also had three generations of Codfish; but one Lucretia Codfish, taking a dislike to her name, altered it to Bodfish, which those who disliked her, of course, altered

ix. Canon Bardsley, as a story somewhat doubtful but too good to disbelieve, says that a Mr. Salmon, having been presented by his wife with three boys at one birth, gave them the names of 'Pickled,' 'Potted' and 'Fresh' (917. 497).

at once into Badfish. Moreover, we have had a Sturgeon, sometime munitioner to His Majesty King Edward IV, and thus a very royal sturgeon, one who listened many a Christmas Eve, no doubt, to the carol of good cheer they sang in the falling snow outside his door:—

> 'Delicate minced pies
> To feast every virgin,
> Capon and goose likewise
> Brawn, and a dish of sturgeon.'

Of the Beasts born on this Royal manor, upon the confines of the Royal forest, we could show a terrifying number, a complete Bestiary indeed. It is a pity to deprive our family of Best of their superlative excellence; but they are not entitled to it; they are descended from the *le Beestes* of the thirteenth century (917. 487). Our Fitches bear the obsolete name of the polecats. Our Oliphants, i.e. Elephants, died out just before the first circus came. If Thomas Eaw left descendants they certainly did not bray out the fact in our registers. Our Griffins are not obsolete, but they have got entangled with the Griffiths. Our Does and Roes survive (x). Turning to little things, we have had a Humble-bee, and we have had a family of Mouse. The Widow Mouse of 1650 was the last of them.

Of birds we have had both great and small. Shilcocks, from Shrillcock, a Throstle, Pelicans, Falcons, Buzzards, Corbets (i.e. ravens), Goslings, Puttocks (i.e. kites), Sparrow-hawks (later forms Sperehawk, Sparke), Cootes, Sheldrakes, Ruddocks (i.e. Robin-redbreasts), Pinnocks (i.e. Hedge-sparrows), Knotts (i.e. Sandpipers, connected by a popular, but quite mendacious, tradition with King Canute). The Titmus or Titmouse family have nested here since the fifteenth century, but after 1650 they fell upon evil days. William Tittmose of Hitchin, who left to better himself at Wallington in 1680, fared further and fared worse: '1682. Petition of William Tittmose, showing that he is in great want of relief, having a wife and two children to maintain and nowhere to lodge them in, so that he and they are forced to lie in the Church porch of Wallington' (Herts Q.S. Minute Book, 4. 177*d*).

Thirdly and lastly, we will take Bardsley's classification of

x. John Doe and Richard Roe, those names so dear to English case law as imaginary litigants, were once in actual litigation here.

nicknames ' from peculiarities of disposition, complimentary and derogatory.' In this matter he is inclined to think well of mankind, as if they were for the most part complimentary beings. Here at Hitchin, however, we have not found it so. As Hertfordshire hedgehogs, we are prickly in our speech and disposition. Still, we can show a muster of pretty surnames: Truman, Silverspon (i.e. one born lucky—*bonum nomen, bonum omen*), Curtis (courteous), Murrimuth (merry-mouth), Makepeace, Thorowgood and Toogood, Gentle, Doughty, Wellbeloved. But some which at first sight appear complimentary, on examination prove the reverse. For example, Love as a surname is sometime from A.F. *love*, a wolf. Grace is from the French *le gras*, the fat; and Knight is not always knightly, for Anglo-Saxon *cniht* means servant (924. 145).

And now for the derogatory names. Of these in their degrees; for some are mild and merely playful, e.g. Wisebeard, Milksop and Shakehead. This last was the name of Stephen le Shacketh, chaplain at Hitchin in 1321. No doubt he was accustomed to shake his head over the sins of his people. Others are in the ironical, quizzical manner of those who deplore the excess of goodness or gracefulness in their fellow-creatures. Holyman, Waddilow (i.e. Wade in love), Lovekins, Sweetsyr—these are jibes at those who had the defects of their fine qualities. Others begin to be rude. Highbid is an excellent nickname for a vainglorious man. So is Tredgold for a spendthrift. So is Pickbone for a miser. So is Trepas for a sinner. Gotobed is another for a sluggard (xi). But Middleditch, though eminently suitable for a drunkard, is purely local; and Rennie, which used to be derived from *renegatus*, a renegade, is now held to spring from *renatus*, i.e. reborn, with its obvious Scriptural allusions. Our original Circuits (M.E. *surguidie*, from O.F.) would have been pointed at for their arrogance, and our Bessemers (M.E. *bismer*) held up to mockery and derision.

But many of these nicknames went beyond the point of rudeness. They were bestowed out of malice aforethought. Give a dog a bad name and hang him—that was the motive behind these slanderous sobriquets. It could not be expected that our Malkins (*mal chien*) would prosper, and they never did. They

xi. Our Gotobeds came to Hitchin in the sixteenth century from Cambridgeshire, where they are native, and where they still endure. Professor Weekley speaks of certain undergraduates contemporary with himself at Cambridge ' who occasionally slaked their thirst at a riverside inn kept by Bathsheba Gotobed ' (924. 206).

lived down to their names. The last of them came regularly to Hitchin Bench of a Tuesday, but he was an amusing rascal, took his punishment well, and never left the court with his tail between his legs. Another such name was inflicted on our Elizabethan witch, Mary Bychance, just to remind all and sundry that she had been misbegotten by the Devil or the Lord knows whom. Another was dubbed Malculvert (O.F., Culvert), just to remind him that he was a miscreant and a low-down varlet (cf. *Lat. collibertus*, freed slave). Another was murderously named Cain; and Abel was prefixed to drive the accusation home: Abel Cain.

PORTRAIT OF A HITCHIN SCOLD

Another of our families was condemned to go down to the grave as Mouldy. Nor do you find any marked respect shown for women. Perhaps our Wormwoods, Shrews and Scolds deserved their names; and if they were like the portrait of a scold by Samuel Lucas appearing on this page one hastily agrees. But it was cruel to insult those ill-favoured women, who were the creation of Almighty God just as much as their enchanting sisters. Poor Lettice Scareman! Is it surprising that she died a spinster?

Some of these slanders, as I said, are deliberately planned. For example, there was a Hitchin woman in 1312 bearing the pleasant name of Scholastica Hiche. Unfortunately she got into

trouble at Baldock in the same year. But why should she have her name altered, even in the records of the realm, from Hiche to Biche? Men were more adroit. There was one sinner here who for reasons evident enough earned the nickname of Thomas Bawd: that was in 1453. Before he died, however, he had given a twist to his name and made it Bauld. His children continued the good work of rehabilitation, and were before they died honoured under the style of Bold. In precisely the same way another family, beginning unpropitiously as Lewd, were in the next century merely Loud, and in the end became quite respectable as Lloyd; the descendant of Simon Leper, 1325, had by 1625 disguised himself as Simon Loper; and the descendants of Henry Lecherous of 1314 were by 1614 trading as apothecaries under the name of Liquorish (xii).

And now, at the conclusion of my study on Surnames, I will do as I did with Field-names and place my remaining examples, unclassified, in a Schedule, and there leave them for further study on the part of my readers, promising a more particular treatment of such as appear worthy of it in my later editions:—

Lucy Uppyng	Jonathan Quince	Bennet Riddiphet
Tabitha Pilgrim	Lazarus Snailwort	Philander Morley
Wigmore Wiskin	Ezekiel Thickpenny	Peter Poleye
Thomas Poydras	Humphrey Swallow	Katharine Jollyfellow
Godefrid Swythere	Ann Outlaw	Woolmardine Plum
Tobias Trim	Cuthbert Peacock	Susan Dolremse
Susannah Sparrow	Robert Shipsea	John Whippam
Solomon Boosey	Bathsheba Nercoat	Greediana Tarboy
King Fisher	Damasine Wiggs	Mary Mustrane
Alice Pebble	Keturah Gorge	Honour Hannam
Immanuel Campion	John Mecum	Peter Capreole
Cornelius Humblebee	Christopher Port	William Furian
Joan Soberly	Hester Funeral	James Neegose
Mercy Lamkin	William Blaco	Margaret Ratkiso
Timothy Thomas	William Phago	John Nyx
Susannah Travel	Lucretia Gambol	John Unkyll
Mary Quint	John Broomwit	John Slot
Elizabeth Pluckrose	Elizabeth Yielding	Derrick Stamperowe
Peregrine Woodnut	Ghost Butteridge	William Porrige (xiii).

xii. This 'mollification,' as old Camden called it, was easy enough in medieval times, but not so easy afterwards. W. Paley Basildon has called attention to a much later example of name conversion which worked the other way: 'A French family named *L'Eglise*, settled in London towards the end of the seventeenth century, became involved in lengthy Chancery proceedings. By 1701 their name was changed to *Le Glyse*, and in 1709 it appeared as *Legless*.'

xiii. May I remind readers who are attracted by any of these names that,

Names, names, names! And what's in a name you say? Well, that is a question I have tried to answer. It is difficult enough, but how much more difficult to realize that these names, standing so yellow now in the Register books, represent creatures of flesh and blood, once upon a time inhabitants of this very town, men and women who grew up from cradle to grave in the same houses, walked the same streets, climbed the same hills, and played by the same streams as we.

Already they are another world away; sunk into oblivion amongst the innumerable host of those ' which have no memorial, who are perished as though they had never been born.' They had their day and ceased to be. Only Hitchin remains.

morally if not legally, they are my particular property? This needs to be pointed out because a well-known playwright has already appropriated Batalion Shotbolt out of my first volume and has stuck him into a play which may be seen before long on the London stage. He as a friend of mine is immune from any injunction, but let other playwrights and novelists beware! Sir Walter Scott, they may remember, used to dole out a guinea very cheerfully to anyone who brought him a surname or dialect word not known to him before. It would be a very proper custom to revive. But I will leave it to their courtesy and conscience. I have some names, not entered on this list, which I would not sell for five guineas!

' BACK-FORMATION ' OF A HITCHIN PHILOLOGIST

THE FIRE BRIGADE (i)

' I am glad that my weak words
Have struck but thus much show of fire.
Julius Caesar, i. 2.

I

MONGST the Orders of the day issued when Captain Isaac Chalkley took over the command of the Hitchin Fire Brigade in 1875 I find one put for more emphasis into italics: *Each man will be expected to make himself as efficient as possible and to obey orders willingly and cheerfully, and to talk as little as possible in the execution of his duty.* I do not know how far these rules apply to me, who am ' under orders ' to write this section of my work; but efficiency I have studied to attain. I can ' hasten to the Engine House ' of my history knowing that I am ' fully equipped ' with all the thousands of records that survive. But to ' talk as little as possible '! Does that also apply? Perhaps it should. For the history of brave men, for that of a Brigade like this, how weak are all our words. Here we are concerned not with words, but deeds; deeds of voluntary and public service, unselfish in motive, unflinching in all the perils of execution, and concerned not with the destruction of human life, as sadly chances to most deeds of courage, but with its saving, and with the preservation of our English homes. Not calmly upon paper, I think, but vividly, intensely, in the fire-glow of many a wild, ruinous night, in the glare of the devouring flames, in the crash of falling timbers, in columns of smoke and columns of saving water, should their tale be told. With that chastened thought in our minds we will receive our call, and in the execution of our duty talk ' as little as possible.'

As one handles the earliest records the thought constantly rises, ' How helpless a thing is man, how slow to learn, how lacking in invention.' Here in the early seventeenth century, for example, we were using the same primitive appliances which

i. I have to thank Charles Loftus Barham, ten years Hon. Sec. of the Hitchin Fire Brigade, and Walter G. Bell, F.S.A., author of *The Great Fire of London*, for their help in the preparation of this chapter.

CONDER'S FIRE IN HITCHIN MARKET PLACE, 1836

From a sketch by Samuel Lucas

they were using when our parish church was struck by lightning and set on fire in 1292, or when Offa's palace, adjoining the church, was reduced to a smoking mass of lamentable ruins in 910; the same appliances again which Augustus Caesar was using when the Eternal City was consumed for the seventh time in 12 B.C. What could you hope to do with a mere hand-squirt of 2½-inch bore, whose effective delivery was no more than a gallon? That and a fire hook or two and a few leaky leather buckets. Do you wonder that the tale is always of disaster? Do you see the Lord of our Manor and the Defender of the Faith leaping out of the window of the Angel for dear life in 1523, with not even a shirt upon his kingly back? (see p. 243 above). Do you see poor Olyver in 1590 paying what few shillings he has left in the world to Thomas Harding, the local white-witch or diviner, 'being desirous to know who fired his mother's house'? (72. 1. 3). Look on the pitiful figure of Elizabeth Rugmer of Hitchin, widow, standing on May 10, 1619, in front of the magistrates in Quarter Sessions, and listen to her as she stammers out her tale of woe. Her dwelling-house, and the household stuff, the corn and the grain saved over from last harvest 'to the value of £40,' has all of it been 'burned with fyer.' Will the Justices have mercy on the widow and the fatherless? Will they at least give her licence to ask, receive, gather and have the charitable devotion of well-disposed people within the county for the relief of herself and her eight poor children (72. 1. 48)?

Before them, again, in 1625, stands John Throe of Hitchin, weaver, with a petition in his hand 'subscribed by divers of the inhabitants of the better sorte of the same towne.' He hands it to their Worships. It shows that 'he hath lived of himself, and with his labour and paines-taking hath supported and mayntayned his wife, children and familie, yett is now fallen into greate povertie by reason of a lamentable fire happening at Hitchin aforesaid which burnt down the barn and all the outhouses with all his corn and other goods, to the utter undoing of him and his family unless some charitable course be taken thereon' (72. 5. 69). Once more the Justices' licence is granted, as it is again to Thomas Parsons and Elizabeth Shuffield and Zachary Wye, 'poor inhabitants of Hitchin,' in 1629. But Thomas Parsons has to appear, not as a petitioner, but as prisoner six months later, for he had 'collected divers sums of money and detained the same

from the other two' (72. 5. 120, 129). Another petitioner who comes before them is Affliction Rose, who was given that lugubrious name because on three occasions he had suffered loss by fire (72. 5. 125).

Where was the Hitchin Fire Brigade in those devastating days? Well, there was none. All that the parish possessed was a few rusty appliances stowed away in St. Mary's tower, in the charge of the Churchwardens and Overseers, whose doubtful duty it was to come for them if they chanced to hear of the fire and if they could find the key. 'Whilst I was musing the fire burned,' says the Psalmist. With the parish officers snug in bed, or snoring by the tavern fire, how often that was true. And you could not alter them. They were the creatures of their age. It was God's will if a fire came—a visitation of the Most High; and with their half-timbered dwellings and thatched roofs it was impossible to stop it if you tried. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and a fire will have its way. There again their Bible told them true. There are four things that are never satisfied: 'the grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not filled with water, and the fire that saith not *It is enough*' (*Prov.* 30. 16).

Not till the Civil War had made men self-reliant, and ardent preservers of the Commonwealth which they had won, do you find any escape from this inertia. But Cromwell and his Major-Generals were alive to all the dangers of the State. They and their Acts and Ordinances were everywhere. You begin to see the Court Leet of Hitchin Manor waking up. At court after court the tenants are enjoined to keep buckets of water outside their doorways as a precaution against fire. Session after session in 1654 the Hitchin Magistrates are commanded 'to keep diligent watch and take a strict account of all strangers, which will not only be a means to suppress all loose and idle persons, but may probably cause some of those who come from abroad to kindle fires here to be apprehended and seized upon' (72. 1. 109). At St. Albans the enlightened Corporation provided 'a substantial engine of brass with its carriage for the purpose of beating and drowning of fires'—the wonder and envy of the county. There was some uncertainty about the way to work it, but the directions were sufficiently precise: 'Lett the Engine stand halfe full of water at all times but in ffrosty weather; and when a ffrost comes lett out the water, and lett it stand empty duringe the frost. Observe when you goe to worke the engine

that ffower or five men be placed at each end, and lett them lift up their hands with the handles as high as they can, and pull downe the handles againe as low as they can, and the men to work and make their stroakes jointly, and as nere as they can together. The handles are marked, therefore be sure that the handles be putt on at the right ends, for there are markes alike on one handle and on one post *viz.* two little notches. Lett the pyns be putt into their right places againe. There is a wrench to take the engine in pieces, one end thereof unskrewes the inward screwes, and another the lower screwes ' (956. 4).

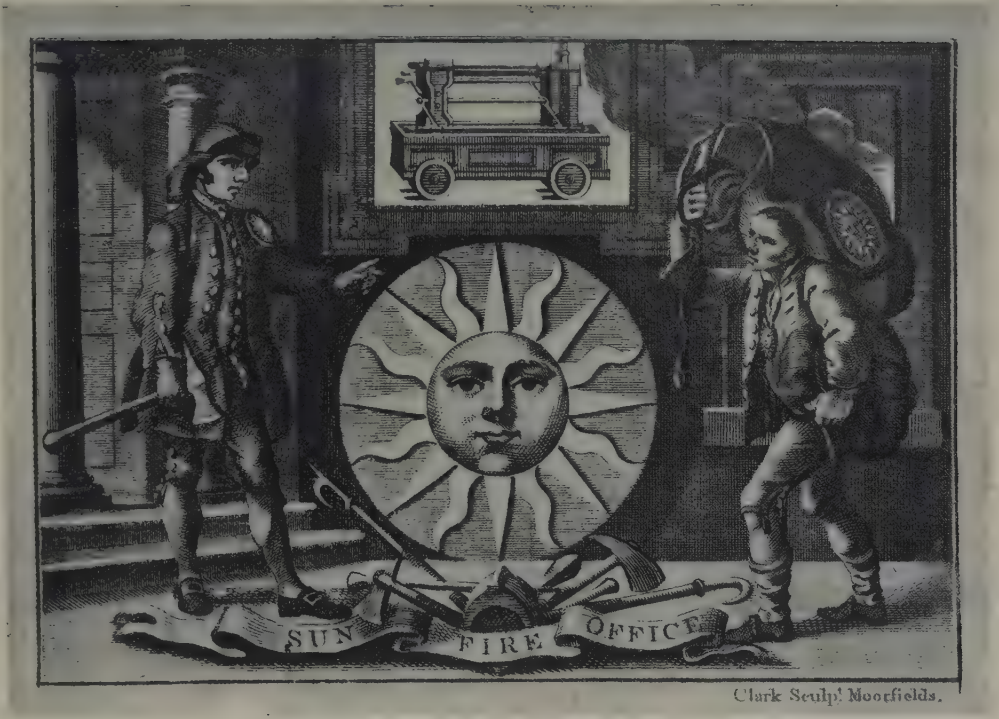
II

But it needed the Great Fire of London in 1666 to drive the lesson home. The conflagration, even at this distance, was a pillar of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night, which not even a parish beadle could sleep through. At Hitchin the townsmen were in tense and dreadful expectation. Seeing the glare in the sky they asked, Was it London, or was it nearer still? The whole country was in alarm. Horsemen at full gallop came hurrying through, shouting confused and contradictory orders. Hertfordshire was to send two hundred soldiers forthwith, and carts laden with pickaxes, spades and buckets. Hitchin was to send six (53). Day after day passed and not one of the six returned. Meantime the whole town stood to arms. It was not safe to go to bed—not even for a woman. In the County Records you can still hear the town constable having words with Elizabeth Warland of Ippollitts. Widow or no widow, she must get up at once. The fire was coming nearer. She might be needed even with her cracked old bucket. After it was all over she was haled before the magistrates ' for refusing to watch at the constable's request in September last when the fire was in London ' (72. 1. 184).

Who set London alight? That was the other question which troubled the minds of men. Was it the Papists, was it the Quakers? Or was it Thomas Ibbot, who with five others, ' suspected to be privy to the fyreing of London,' had been arrested close to them and carried off to Hertford? Or was what Ibbot said the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? ' It is,' he maintained, ' from the hand of the Lord, and he will give the King an account of it when he comes to him ' (72. 1. 179).

That the Great Fire of London was no nine days' wonder, but a continuing terror, is shown by the protective measures taken by the local Justices. Some of these are almost puerile, but the people were willing to do anything either great or small to be saved from such another calamity. ' 1684. Whereas it is found by experience that the taking of tobacco is very commonly used of late in the streets, lanes, stables and outhouses and may be of dangerous consequences and cause the firing of houses and towns if not prevented, it is Ordered that no person or persons do hereafter presume to take tobacco in any streets, lanes, stables; and it is required that all constables, head-boroughs and other officers do make diligent search and enquiry after all such persons and apprehend and bring them before a Justice ' (Herts Q.S. Court for 6 Oct., 1684, f. 200). In 1688 another order was issued ' that no person whatsoever should presume to make or encourage the making of any bonfires or any public fireworks without leave from the Justices or His Majesty's Council ' (Herts Q.S. Minute Book 4. f. 45). More useful than either of these trifling enactments was the experiment of another Hitchin magistrate, William Hale of King's Walden, who in 1683 founded a Friendly Society which insured its members against fire on a basis of mutual contribution. The fire-mark of this company, an iron plate fixed to each house insured, bore the crest of the Hale family.

Urged by the destruction in 1677 of Shotting Mill, afterwards known as Burnt Mill, and now as Grove Mill, the Churchwardens had followed the example of St. Albans and purchased a fire-engine. We do not know the precise year of its purchase or the cost of it. We do know, however, that it was a primitive affair: merely a wooden tank on four solid wheels, with a brass pump in the middle worked by two handles, in all respects similar to the engine shown in the illustration that fronts this page. We know also that it served the parish until 1723, and was then sold by Churchwardens James Lucas, James Turner and John Newton for £6 (934). With this sum in their hands, and a balance on the old rate, and some donations—e.g. ' received from an unknown hand one guinea '—they were able to purchase two more manuals from William Coles, one for £14 and the other for £8. These were delivered just in time for the great fire which destroyed the village of Caldecote on April 24th that year. For a town of our modest dimensions it might have been thought that two



THE EARLIEST FIRE-ENGINE

From an engraving on the Sun Fire Office policies

engines were sufficient. But in 1730 Churchwardens John Malein, David Marshall and Daniel Warner went to London with two horses and purchased a third, a greatly improved engine, from a Mr. Deane for £30 15s. 6d. In that year, therefore, the parish possessed three engines, six dozen leather buckets, purchased for £10 16s. in 1717 and 1728, and two ancient fire-hooks which might have seen service in Elizabethan days—a very considerable equipment for a country town.

The parish evidently took a pride in its engines and looked after them well. At this time, too, you may trace the beginning of that organization which was to result later in a fire-brigade. As early as 1743 there are references to the 'Ingenears' in the Wardens' accounts, and sometimes there is a record of the men who attend a fire. But at this stage of development the engines are the chief concern, and they are constantly needing attention. Bills come in regularly for 'playing the engines' at the quarterly practice, for 'beer when they tryd the engines,' for 'pitching the engines,' for 'taking the Engine a pieces and oyling,' for 'puting a tire on the Ingen, 15 spikes,' for 'lining and mending the 2 larg Arm irons to ye Great Ingen ye men play it with,' for '3 setts of Irons of 3 wheels and hetein, put-in-on, altering Revitts and Burnin the hools Bigger,' for 'new Lince pin and double key to ditto.' So with the other appliances. The buckets have to be 'pitched and oyled and bottomed.' Three dozen more have to be bought in 1753, numbers painted on them, and a deal board provided 'to hang the Bucketts on.' In 1762 there is 2s. 6d. to pay for 'mending and lining a Larg fier hook and put 3 lb. of iron to dito and 3 Staples and nails' (934).

In comparison with the sums expended on the engines those expended on the 'ingenears' seem very small. But those were times when men offered themselves willingly for 6d. a day, or for half a gallon of beer. The following items may be left to speak for themselves: '1728. Nov. 5. Paid Arthur Wilson and John Lyle for beer when the fire was at Mrs. Carters, £1'; 'Paid the Ingenear a bill, 21s.'; '1749. To Beer to the Men as plaid the Engines when mended and cleaned after they came from Willion Fire'; '1765. To Billey Dixon and Wm. Dixon for watching at the Fire 3s. 3d., and more for candles and torches, 4s.'; '1771. Paid Robert Baker, William Ball, John Day, John Jeeves, Ben Munsey, William Smith and Francis Field for attending at night at Widow Hawks's Fire, 10s. 6d.'; '1779.

Paid the men for cleaning and setting up the Engines two different times after Mr. Whitney's fires at Gosmore, 13s.' (934).

III

From what has just been quoted it is clear that the engines were not left to rust in idleness in St. Mary's tower. Throughout this period Hitchin had been almost immune from serious fires; but its neighbours were constantly calling out for help. In 1722 Buntingford was visited with ' a Dreadful Fire,' which ' went on with such fury ' that if the wind had not veered the whole town might have been consumed. The mansion at Stagenhoe, near Hitchin, perished utterly in 1737. Royston lost thirty-six houses in 1747; and Barkway nineteen cottages in 1748.

On September 11, 1762, however, there was a conflagration at Hitchin, the like of which not even the oldest inhabitant could remember. According to the London journals (for, strangely enough, no local record survives) as many as twenty cottages in Hollow Lane were levelled to the ground (936).

That was bad enough, but in 1783 there befell a series of fires which reduced all the cottagers and householders to terror. It was evident that a great conspiracy of arson was afoot which, taken with a startling increase in crimes of violence and the threatening attitude of the populace, made peaceable and propertied citizens look forward with dread to the prospect of an English revolution. The campaign of incendiarism opened at Potton in the middle of harvest on August 14th. The casualties were appalling. Most of the township was destroyed and damage suffered to the extent of £25,000. The Hitchin people, profoundly moved by this catastrophe, contributed £269 11s. for the support of their ruined and homeless neighbours, but were soon to be reminded that charity should be reserved for those at home. Biggleswade was the next to suffer, though there the fire was checked (ii). Then, coming nearer still, letters were found at Baldock threatening to set that town on fire. A few days later Hitchin was attacked. On October 21st the kiln-house of Mr. Lyle at New England was burnt down, but the ' ingenears ' saved his farm-buildings and his stacks. Ten days later a fire broke

ii. The threat to Biggleswade matured two years later, June 16, 1785, when 100 houses and 10 maltings were set ablaze. The Hitchin people watched the flames from Windmill Hill.

out at Mr. Bury's malt-kiln in Tilehouse Street, not far from the Baptist Chapel, where Pastor John Geard was holding 'a Solemn fast day on account of several fires in the neighbourhood, which do not appear to be occasioned by accident.' On the sixth day following, the barn of Mr. Collison near Butts Close was fired, and the chaff-house of John Lucas the same night. On November 8th a barn occupied by Mr. Folbigg was destroyed. On November 11th the firemen were summoned to a stack fire at Gosmore.

They were hardly back from that when they received a call to Samuel Crawley's farm along the London Road. All save the farmhouse was destroyed. On November 24th a Maydencroft stack was set alight. On November 28th a letter was found in the Bedford Road threatening to set the whole town on fire: 'You gentlemen, mealmen and bootchers and backers and Grocers of Hitchin . . . if you don't sink [i.e. your prices] we will burn you down as fow [fast] as we cann.' The Overseers published this letter as a broadsheet, together with a list of the seven incendiary fires just named. On December 2nd John Whitney had his cornstacks fired, and Samuel Bradley his haystacks on December 13th. On Christmas Day John Whitney's farm was again attacked, and this time the buildings were destroyed. 'The house was in imminent danger,' writes one of the onlookers, 'it having taken fire, and must have been burned down had not engines and assistance from Hitchin come. It was inhabited by three families, and two of the women lay in at the time. One of them had been brought to bed about ten days. The other, who lay in one of the rooms that took fire, only two days. Both of them ran out into the highway almost naked, without shoes or stockings, although it was a frost and a deep snow, but both of them survived' (15. 15). On January 16, 1784, a fire occurred in King's Arms Yard, Bucklersbury, and another fire in the same yard on February 29th.

Thus the Hitchin firemen were called to five fires within seven days, seven within a month, eleven in nine weeks and two days and thirteen fires within twenty weeks. A reward of £50 was offered for the discovery of the offenders, and John Radcliffe promised the King's pardon for any accomplice who would turn informer. 'My dear friend,' writes the poet Cowper to the Rev. John Newton on November 17th, in the very midst of these misfortunes, 'the country around us is much alarmed with

apprehensions of fire. Two have happened since that of Olney. One at Hitchin, where the damage is said to amount to £11,000, and another at a place not far from Hitchin, of which I have not learnt the name. Letters have been dropped at Bedford threatening to burn the town, and the inhabitants have been so intimidated as to have placed a guard in many parts of it several nights past.'

IV

By good luck or by the endeavours of the 'ingenears,' the town came through this ordeal of fire with only a partial loss. It was, as John Geard said, a brand plucked out of the burning. But no one who lived through that reign of terror was likely to forget it; the memory of it was seared into their very bones. Moreover, the incendiary fires continued, though at longer intervals, for many years; and right up to the Reform Act inflammatory letters were being posted about the town. In 1795 the kilns at Maydencroft were destroyed by an incendiary. In 1796 a 'Hertfordshire Society for the Security of Property' was formed, and large rewards were offered for evidence leading to the conviction of those who 'maliciously and wilfully destroyed buildings and property.' In 1801 William Cox was sentenced to death for arson. In 1817 William Moles was found guilty of the same offence, and, though a mere boy, was hanged upon the scene of his crime (see above, p. 320). Other alarming fires there were of doubtful origin. In 1793, for example, William Langford's furniture store in Sun Street was gutted, and only by great efforts were the surrounding houses in that congested quarter saved; some part of the credit being due to the Stevenage treadle-engine, which was hurried over in a wagon: 'Dec. 28. Paid Mrs. Allbury (of the Cock Inn) for beer for the men who brought the Engine from Stevenage, 5s.; Paid the men for attending at the fire, £2 2s.' A few years later the Hitchin 'ingenears' were able to requite this service by taking their three engines in three wagons to a fire at Stevenage, which consumed forty-two houses and many outbuildings and barns. Indeed, it nearly consumed the Hitchin engines also, for they returned in a sorrowfully singed and scorched condition. The wardens' accounts for the following fortnight are crowded with bills for 'milled lead to the Ingins, sement to joints, best blue and best red paint, writing 61 letters

and 7 figures on ingins, marking 120 bucketts (iii), new leathers to the plungers, and painting a ladder ' (934).

It is in this period one observes a growing demand for a competent fire service. Those three little engines were getting absurdly out of date. Useful enough in small outbreaks in the town; but for those in the hamlets beyond, when the machines had to be hoisted on to wagons and sent lumbering along the lanes, how maddeningly slow they were! There were complaints about the management, too. The Churchwardens, who were legally in charge, were always being changed. The beadle was never there when he was wanted. The ' ingenears ' needed such a deal of starting and such a deal of stoking. On one occasion they were said to have consumed £2 6s. 7d. worth of beer, enough of itself, if applied through the hose, to have put out any ordinary fire. On the whole one feels that Dickens's caricature of the fire service of that age was not very wide of the truth (iv).

Then arose Robert Newton, a man of exhaustless energy and practical experience, and set the parish to rights. When he was made People's Warden in 1814 he induced the ratepayers to put down £109 14s. 6d. for a large horse-drawn engine designed for twenty pumpers by Tilley, which, like those tiny manual engines of 1723, became at once the wonder and envy of the country-side. He then proceeded to take the control of the fire service out of the hand of the Wardens and vest it in that of a Hitchin Fire Establishment composed of the Churchwardens, the agents of the Insurance Companies (v), and certain leading inhabitants. In place of the go-as-you-please ' ingenears ' a Hitchin Fire Brigade was constituted, consisting of twenty-four men such as Newton could trust, and holding office under the superintendence of his son, who had been given the name of the illustrious Sir

iii. The increase in the number of buckets was due to the generosity of the Phoenix Insurance Company, who had presented twenty-four new buckets in 1781.

iv. ' Two little boys run to the beadle . . . and report that some neighbouring chimney is on fire; the engine is hastily got out, and a plentiful supply of boys being obtained and harnessed to it with ropes, away they rattle over the pebbles, the beadle running—we do not exaggerate—at one side, until they arrive at some house smelling strongly of soot, at the door of which the beadle knocks with considerable gravity for half an hour. No attention being paid to these manual applications, the engine turns off amid the shouts of the boys; it pulls up once more at the parish church tower, and the beadle " pulls up " the unfortunate householder next day for a reward.'

v. Towards the cost of the new engine the Sun Fire Office had given £10 and the Phoenix £10 10s.

Isaac, the pride of their family. That the new engine and the old engines might be under his very nose he decided to house them in the yard of his business premises in Tilehouse Street. It had its drawbacks, for the yard was used as a drying-ground for the family washing.

If there happened to be a fire on washing day, there was great excitement. Isaac Newton would be dancing about hot with zeal, shouting 'Cut the lines, cut the lines.' The horses, as they galloped up to their places before the engine, would trample the laundry underfoot; and Superintendent Newton would go off to the fire, more afraid of what his wife would say when he returned than of any peril in the flames (951).

V

You may see the hand of the two Newtons everywhere, for nothing escaped their vigilance. It was they who ordered new staves for the firemen and painted them, they who varnished the ancient fire-hook and repitched the buckets. It was they who provided the sheep-skin and cord to keep the engine warm. It was they who inserted the two earthenware pipes in the wall of the Priory pond, so that the suction hose of the engines might pass through and draw from the deeper water. It was they who trained the two plumbers who accompanied the engines to every fire. At their request Dr. Joseph White Niblock, Master of the Free School and Curate of the parish, preached a sermon on 'Church and Fire Briefs,' which was printed and circulated far and wide. At their request, again, the Justices gave notice 'that every person who shall sell, give away or fire off any Fire-work on the 5th November, or on any other day, will be proceeded against and fined' (901. 1814, Oct. 26). This was too much. No wonder the spoil-sport Big-Wigs were 'be-hooted and be-howled at,' though there came a day when their warnings were remembered: 'Thou knowest,' writes William Lucas to his son Francis on November 5, 1831, 'how much a practice it is after dark for the boys to let off Gunpowder in the streets. A boy in Hollow Lane nearly filled the tube of a bellows with powder, having stopped up one end and then let it off. Whether it burst or not I cannot ascertain, but the explosion was so loud and the shock so great that without occasioning any apparent injury externally he died almost immediately. He was about thy age.

I hope this event may have some tendency to prevent a practice which has long been a nuisance' (26). As a further precaution, the Justices ventured to suppress bonfires too, but there again they were worsted. On the next November 5th the indignant youths of the parish tore up a fence which surrounded the acacia trees at the Triangle, uprooted one of the trees and had a prodigious bonfire in the Market Place. If there were to be any more 'suppressions' they threatened to have a still larger fire the next year and burn magistrates and constables as well.

GUY FAWKES

It was a pity for the Newtons to waste their time over these squibs and squabbles when more serious affairs were claiming their attention. In 1817, as they were driving through Walsworth on the way to a fire at Weston, the village roughs boarded the engine and threw off fireman Dawborn, with the result that the wheels passed over him and he was killed. Whereupon the Newtons called a Town's Meeting and the following resolutions were adopted:—

1. That twenty-four men be appointed to work the engines and assist in cases of fire.

2. That such men be remunerated for their services by the Fire Offices in the usual manner.
3. That on any alarm of fire the men appointed repair to the engine-house, and such of them as shall be named by the Churchwardens or agents, do ride upon and attend the engines.
4. That no other person than the men appointed be permitted to ride on the engine.
5. That the Engineer be authorized to require such additional assistance as he may deem necessary.
6. That these resolutions with the names of the men be written on a board and placed in the engine-house.

Of still graver concern was the startling increase in the number of incendiary fires throughout the eighteen-twenties and thirties. 'People's minds,' writes William Lucas in December 1830, 'have been much alarmed at the unsettled state of the country. Mobs of people, mostly agricultural, have assembled and demanded higher wages. One extraordinary thing is the many fires of farming premises that of late have happened through wicked incendiaries who are supposed to have travelled thro the country for that purpose. They began in Kent, extended into Sussex and Hampshire, broke out in Essex and Cambridgeshire and have occurred in some instances in our neighbouring county of Bedford. The only instance yet near us is a wheat-cock belonging to T. Cockayne Esquire of Ickleford, which stood by itself and was burnt. But we are in an uncomfortable state of alarm and obliged to keep a nightly watch over our premises' (28). In a later passage of his diary, written after the disastrous fire of Wymondley Bury farm in 1833, he refers to these crimes 'as being not only cause of alarm and terror, but also of sorrow for the depravity they exhibit of the minds of the peasantry.'

The smouldering embers of that fire were a powerful argument for Isaac Newton when he came to ask the parish for another horse-drawn engine. Times were bad and money was scarce, but when the fire devils were walking up and down the land it was no time for ratepayers to sit down and haggle over pounds, shillings and pence. To relieve the rates, subscriptions came pouring in. The Phoenix Office gave as much as £20, and smaller sums were received from the Sun, County, Royal Exchange

HITCHIN FIRE BRIGADE AT LUTON HOO

From an engraving by Thomas Stevens, 1843

and British Insurance Companies. At last the needful £150 was got in; and William Hill, with four horses and postillions from the Sun Inn, rode up to Messrs. Shand, Mason & Co. of London and fetched back the 'Hitchin Subscription Fire-engine, 1834,' an improved patent carriage engine, with 7-inch barrels and 8½-inch stroke, fitted for thirty pumpers, the whole painted vermilion and picked out with green (vi).

VI

The first fire which the new manual is known to have attended was at Messrs. Tapp & Conder's drapery store in Hitchin Market Place on February 24, 1836. It proved to be an unpropitious baptism of fire, for nothing was saved; Mrs. Tapp, an old lady of eighty years, died of the shock. Apparently the hose was found to be defective. In Samuel Lucas's rapid drawing of the fire which stands in the forefront of this chapter, you can see the crowd proffering advice and getting in the firemen's way. Five days later another town's meeting was summoned, and a further £50 subscribed for six coils of 2½-inch hose, two lengths of 3-inch suction pipes and forty additional buckets. Upon the committee appointed to 'make the necessary arrangements in case of a future fire' one sees the names of Septimus Wright, John and Joshua Ransom, John and William Hawkins, George Groom, Benjamin Tatham, Isaac Newton, William Hainworth, Thomas Lowden, Joseph Margetts Pierson, William Langford and William Lucas.

The 'future fires' were not long in coming. In 1838 Charlton Wind Mill, set alight by its own friction, was burnt to the ground. Two days later the roof of Widow Button's warehouse in Bucklersbury was blown sky-high by an explosion of gunpowder. In 1842 ten more houses were lost in Hollow Lane. But the greatest fire of the period was at Luton Hoo, the seat of the Marquess of Bute, on December 2, 1843. For fifty consecutive hours Isaac Newton with twenty-one firemen fought the flames with the two 'great engines.' They can be seen in the engraving that fronts this page. From the superintendent's accounts we know that the firemen received 15s. each,

vi. The complete specification can be read in the Journal of the makers under the date February 18, 1834. A copy can be seen amongst the collected papers of Charles Loftus Barham.

and sixty-two assistant pumpers received 5s. each. Isaac Newton's manuals therefore necessitated the employment of eighty-three men. After the brigade returned to Newton's yard six men were set to work cleaning the engines and the hose, and Mr. Prudden was given the job of 'repairing the fire-hook.'

In 1836 Isaac Brown, schoolmaster of Hitchin, had subscribed £1 to the new coils of hose. Soon after midnight on February 13, 1845, that same hose was playing on his school at Bull Corner. William Langford, who had also given a pound towards the same hose, had his warehouses involved in the same gigantic fire. It was a pitiful, terrible scene. Little Quaker boys, scared out of their wits, escaping in their nightshirts, to be taken out of the bitter, frosty air into other friendly households soon charitably wide-awake. Sheets of insatiable flame seeking new worlds to conquer; sparks carried by the high wind on to the thatched stables of the Half Moon Inn; and on once again to consume the Lancastrian school. Horsemen sent galloping in all directions to Offley, to Stevenage, to Baldock and to Luton. Primitive engines arriving from the villages in still more primitive wagons. Isaac Newton working his lines of hose from the horse-pond, from the river in Bridge Street, and from the river again in Dead Street, hoping against hope that he might save the town (vii). In the grey light of the next morning a charred heap of ruins and the mangled body of James Foot, crushed to death by a falling wall.

Two other fires of the middle nineteenth century deserve to be recorded. In the dead of night on February 2, 1850, horsemen came clattering over the cobbles of Hitchin Market Place shouting 'Fire! Fire!' Hill at the Sun and Kershaw at the Swan were soon out and about, rousing the firemen and postillions from their sleep. There was a thundering on door after door in the town. Casements were flung open and pale-faced citizens in nightshirts and nightcaps leaned out to hear the dreadful news: 'Hurry! hurry! All Ashwell is afire!' There was a scampering of half-dressed, half-asleep brigadiers down Bucklersbury, and then the two great engines were seen rushing through the streets,

vii. Shortly after this fire, and evidently moved by his experience of it, Newton printed a card of directions, showing where the best supplies of water were to be found and their distances from any given spot. Here is a typical entry: 'If the fire happen in Sun Street, water may be taken from the horse-pond or the river; or if the river is dammed up in the Biggin Orchard, the water will flow half-way up the Sun yard, whence a good supply can be had.'

seven postillions urging on fourteen horses, and the twenty-two firemen anxiously watching the glare in the sky. The rest is silence, and then, after many hours, a bedraggled brigade returning dead-weary and beaten, bringing back their catalogue of woe. The houses and buildings of six farms, the produce of 1,400 acres, twenty-eight houses, three large maltings, and a chapel were destroyed, and two hundred people were burned out of house and home (949).

On March 22, 1853, a fire broke out, again at midnight, at the timber-framed shop of John Gatward, ironmonger, adjoining the Swan Inn. Gatward and his wife, who were sleeping peacefully at the back of the shop, did not realize their danger. Even when roused they waited to dress themselves. Then Gatward proceeded to remove some of the gunpowder (over 130 pounds), whilst his wife lingered upstairs to secure some of her valuables. She was never seen again. A dense volume of smoke suddenly burst out from below. One fireman after another staggered up the stairs, only to reel back, overpowered. Gatward, though half-suffocated, made agonizing attempts to reach his wife: 'Wife, come down! wife, come down!' It was terrible to hear his piteous and unavailing cries.

Meantime the townsfolk, frightened out of their beds, had formed themselves into a double cordon of bucketeers, one line from the horse-pond up Sun Street and the other line from the river by the Biggin and past the Red Cow Inn. Their efforts were all directed to stop the spreading of the fire, and in that they succeeded. But Gatward's shop was doomed; so was the good woman whom everybody longed to save. Soon everything was one seething cauldron of fire, and constant explosions of gunpowder added to the inferno of the flames. It was for those who witnessed it a night of terror, an unforgettable scene.

VII

When Isaac Newton retired in 1851, after thirty-six years' service, he was succeeded by William Jackson, under whose superintendence the engine-house was moved to a range of maltings opening into Wratten. In 1865 he had to cope with a further outbreak of incendiary fires, all of them within the town of Hitchin. The reward offered for information concerning an attempt on the Post Office led to the arrest of a policeman named

Scott, who was subsequently tried and acquitted at the Herts Assizes. When another series of fires broke out in the parish to which Scott had been removed, he was once more arrested, and this time found to be guilty.

About the year 1866 Jackson was succeeded by James Lewin, who held office till 1875, and proved a very efficient superintendent. One hears for the first time of a uniform for the firemen, who hitherto had been distinguished only by their armlets. Brass helmets were provided and leather belts. Once again the engine-house was moved—this time, 1870, to a central position in the Great yard, with its approach from the Market Place. A new 6-inch manual, one of the early London Brigade pattern for twenty-two pumpers, was purchased from Shand, Mason & Co. in 1871 for £122. A fire escape was presented in 1872.

Isaac Chalkley, who took over from Lewin in 1875, was even more efficient. In the rules which he issued on assuming office it is made clear that ' the Captain has absolute and entire control over every subject connected with the Brigade.' The duties of members and officers are imperatively set forth. Any man ' not complying ' with the same, ' or showing insubordination, shall be required to send in his resignation.' But there were no resignations. The new Captain proved to be a beneficent autocrat, and throughout the twenty years of his reign his twelve men followed him faithfully and gallantly into the thick of his fires.

Some of his eighty-five fires should be recorded. By the first of these, on November 7, 1875, Hitchin lost one of its landmarks in the windmill belonging to James Hack Tuke on Windmill Hill. Here, as at Charlton, the friction caused by running the stones when empty set the lower timbers afire, and a hurricane of wind made salvage impossible. The townspeople, however, could not be brought to believe that the fire was unquenchable, and, while the firemen stood by, hundreds of them hurried up the hill with their own buckets of water and dashed them on the flames. One little hero, aged six years, rushed up and down at least twenty times with his toy pail, and burst into floods of tears when the round-house fell. Three years later, February 21, 1878, the Langford family suffered a third time in the destruction of their warehouses in Sun Street and Bucklersbury; and but for the ' extraordinary devotion to duty ' shown by Edwin Logsdon and Charles Loftus Barham

HITCHIN FIRE BRIGADE, 1881

Back Row: A. Foster, C. Harvey, H. Barham.
Front Row: H. Foster, G. Hailey, E. Logsdon, Isaac Chalkley, C. L. Barham, J. Odell, W. Cook

all that quarter of the town would have been lost. At Willian Manor in 1881 the engines were in action for three consecutive days. At Lodge Farm, Ippollitts, on November 5th the same year the brigade had to fight not only the flames but the villagers, who, inflamed with drink and furious at not being invited to assist, opened an onion pit and pelted the firemen with that insulting vegetable. The memory of that obnoxious scene has been whimsically preserved by the addition of onions ever since to the menu of the annual dinners of the brigade (viii).

At 11.30 p.m. on December 30, 1886, when the snow was a foot deep on the highways and drifts concealed the hedges, the brigade was called to three incendiary fires at once. In 1887 Charlton Mill perished in the flames, the mill-house only being saved. In 1889 Grove Mill, alias Burnt Mill, was burnt for the third time. Temple Dinsley was saved in 1888, and Matthew Foster's timber-yard was gutted in 1891.

VIII

Chalkley's captaincy is memorable for two innovations. It was he who first appointed that the annual meeting and supper of the brigade should be held on November 5th. A curious day to choose, because there have been more fires on that day than any other in the year. And it was bound to be so. Those grandmotherly orders of the magistrates about fireworks and bonfires had made not the least impression upon the licensed uproar on Gunpowder Treason day; the gigantic bonfires in the Market Square singeing the very shops; the troops of tatterdemalions racing madly with their fire-balls down the narrow streets; the effigy of old Guido blazing on every hill; the night made hideous with the yell of those ribald lines which the ranters had framed as a hymn of hate for the Pope:—

> 'Holler, boys, holler; make the bells ring;
> Holler, boys, holler; God save the King.
> A rope, a rope to hang the Pope,
> A slice of cheese to choke him,
> A gallon of beer to drink his health
> And a jolly good fire to roast him.'

viii. At another Ippollitts fire the ungrateful villagers refused the use of their own wells: 'Bring your own water,' they exclaimed; 'this belongs to us.' They deserved their fate. One of the villagers had to jump from a bedroom window with his dearest possession, a grandfather clock, clasped in his arms.

In the old days the watchmen and firemen had stood to arms in the open doorway of St. Mary's tower, ready for the fires and the fracas that were sure to come; in the meantime munching the immemorial pork-pasty and nearly setting themselves on fire with Lucas's sparkling ale. That light snack was well enough; but a long menu on tables spread in an upper room at the Angel was not so well. It is grievous to think how many excellent meals have had to be left uneaten in that inn; how often the diners have had to pass out of the frying-pan into the fire. Here is a characteristic entry in the minute-book: 'Nov. 5. Call to Bendish at 9. Mr. William Francis Langford,' the solitary guest, 'was left with the remains of the supper.' After the supper, if no call came through, the firemen would look on, or lend a hand in one of those carnivals for which in the eighteen-sixties and seventies Hitchin was renowned. The London reporters who came down seem surprised that this old-fashioned town, 'with its business *spécialité* of making tombstones,' should so cheerfully disport itself. It was true the few Catholics and the many Quakers held themselves rigidly within doors. But all the rest were abroad, and most of them fearfully and wonderfully arrayed. 'The most aristocratic shops,' says the special correspondent of *The Times*, '—we should rather say emporiums —in the High street affected at first a lofty indifference to the *fête*; but they soon waxed simply human, and disgorged their young ladies and gentlemen to loiter on doorsteps and gaze upon the throng.'

'And then the rain fell and (always for those who did *not* belong to Hitchin) all was mud and misery. To the elect whom Hitchin can call its own the rain mattered little. The town was getting lively in spite of the elements. Country visitors began to arrive and create an immense hubbub at the Crown, the Angel and the rest of the ultra-select hostelries. Still, there was nothing to see. Hitchin had not gone in for abundant decoration, the only banner it seemed to affect being one that bore the laudably simple motto, "Success to the Hitchin Carnival." Youthful warriors in cocked hats that looked woefully like last year's newspapers derided the Pope and all his works in tumultuous bands, and playfully saluted the passing stranger with festive squibs. Brass bands, too, whereof the performers wore gorgeous national costumes of their own invention, began to discourse sweet music in the Market-place and parade the High

street and through humbler parallel thoroughfares that look like the Dunmow of the Flitch of Bacon days—uneven, red-bricked (Hitchin generally looks as though it had had a recent violent attack of scarlatina), with protruding upper stories, pointed gables, and frowning eaves. By seven o'clock the town had filled—and filled, we fear, without the aid of the Metropolis. The average Londoner is too weary to travel forty miles on a rainy day, even to see an old-world town hold its annual revels. No, the pleasure-seekers were simple country-folk who flocked in in primitive gig, creaking cart, and cumbersome van, their babies on their knees, their wives at their sides, red-cloaked—themselves gorgeous, with those wonderful prismatic cravats and flowery waistcoats your British villager alone knows how to discover, for Sunday wear, christenings, and weddings.'

'The festival was going to be peculiarly musical in character, so it was appropriately opened by the united bands of Hitchin and Welwyn, which were commendably united in more than one sense, and entertained us in the Market-place with a variety of airs that almost extended from "Pop goes the weasel" to the "Dead March" in *Saul*, from seven o'clock to half-past. Being such a very musical town, perhaps Hitchin has a surfeit of sweet sounds every day of its melodious life; at any rate, it seemed chiefly interested in the bands as an *entrée en matière*—the *matière* being a general illumination with coloured fires, the preparations for which were observed with truly provincial intentness. And verily, in their preparation, the townsfolk showed excellent and super-provincial taste. We have seen the two most magnificent cities of Europe ablaze from end to end, the Champs Élysées a fairyland of lamps and fires and flowers, the Unter den Linden a vista radiant as Jacob's Ladder; but, thus suddenly revealed by many coloured lights, the quaint old town had, perhaps, a rarer and more potent charm. And when Mr. Sabin's lime-light was brought to play upon its red roofs and irregular *façades*, an onlooker with an eye to the picturesque must have become reconciled to provincialism on the spot.'

'These were but the *bagatelles de la porte*, however. There was Mr. Pain's grand display of fire-works to be admired, cried at, and applauded. The Exhibition consisted of forty-six pieces—rockets, shells, shower "devices," all the marvels of the pyrotechnist's cabinet—and we have seen at the Alexandra Palace what wonders Mr. Pain's cabinet can emit at times. The crowds

along the High street, in the Market-place, at the little antiquated casements and more modern balconies, gazed open-mouthed at the gyration of wheels and spreading of rubies, diamonds, and what-not. The whole display to them was as wonderful, complicated, incomprehensible as a vast page of Celestial shorthand. And when the final motto went up, "Prosperity to the Town of Hitchin," I think they were almost relieved—the splendour had been too much. A gorgeous torch-light procession of a thousand masqueraders was to be the feature of the evening, and, despite an occasional drizzle, despite the slippery stones under foot and the misty air around, the masqueraders were not disappointed. As to the characters, it would be difficult to speak precisely. But who among us cared for such small details as historical fidelity and artistic harmony? The procession looked as though it had kept its wardrobes at Mme. Tussaud's, the Tower, Drury-lane Theatre, and Ratcliff-highway. It started from Bancroft (an outskirt), and paraded the principal streets of the town, under a fierce glare of lime-light. There were sailors, then came "the magnificent banner of the Hitchin Carnival Club"; dancing shakers, who made themselves extremely popular; crusaders, and ten little niggers; the Prince of Wales, surrounded by Rajahs; Dr. Kenealy, with an immense umbrella; icebergs, clowns, and columbines; in fine, a grotesque, impossible, and delightful *ollapodrida* of the absurd, the heroic, the sentimental, and patriotic. And on the skirts of it all the good townfolks hurrahed, let off squibs, courted and feasted on the slippery footway and in the miry road. The Carnival terminated in a monster flight of fire balloons, during which Dr. Kenealy (the doctor does not seem to be eminently popular in the district) (ix) ascended from the Market square, emitting fiery sparks in lieu of the proverbial dewdrop. We left the pleasant old town ruddy in the light of a gigantic bonfire—a fitting termination to the Carnival Guy Fawkes Day.'

IX

Chalkley's other innovation was a *steam* fire-engine, a 260-gallon machine of the London Brigade vertical pattern,

ix. Not unnaturally; for Kenealy was leading counsel for the claimant in the Tichborne Case, whereas Henry Hawkins of Hitchin was making his name as counsel on the other side. Kenealy, for his amazing conduct in the Tichborne Case, was disbarred in 1874.

which was acquired by public subscription in 1887, most of the money being collected by the brigade. It was christened the 'St. George,' and by the Stevenage people in envy 'the old coffee-pot.' On June 23rd the Hitchin fire brigade, on their new steamer, had the honour of passing in review before Queen Victoria at Windsor, all the firemen being presented with medals by command of Her Majesty. In November of that year Chalkley and his men figured again in the Lord Mayor's procession. Chalkley, with his long white beard, was mistaken by the crowd for the famous Captain Shaw and received a great ovation.

'WHERE IS THE FIRE?

The diminution of fires which followed the purchase of the steamer is significant. So long as pumpers were required for manual engines, and so long as a fire meant plenty of beer for them, so long would fires break out in towns and villages. That is the suggestion, and it is one made not only by the cynics but by firemen, too. They knew something of that 'depravity in the minds of the peasantry' over which William Lucas had lamented. They knew scores of yokels and potwallopers who would commit arson for the chance of a pint of beer. It is certain, at any rate, that the temperance movement received an unconscious ally when steam was substituted for manual power.

Not so many fires, but just as many calls. Indeed, the firemen were constantly being fetched out of their beds on a false or frivolous alarm. For example, there was that odd creature, Henry Jermyn of Cock Street, draper, who, according to Francis Lucas, 'suffered much from soreness of chin and shortness of sight. One night, as he was looking at his chin before going to bed, he accidentally set fire to the tassel of his night-cap, which occasioned him great alarm as, on going away from the glass, he saw the light and the sparks, but could not see from whence they came. It is said that he put his head out of the window and called "Fire!"' (966. 91).

Then there was George Lewin, the town constable, who, whenever he was getting the worst of it with the drunken mob in Dead Street, was accustomed to call out 'Fire!'. It was an ingenious method of summoning assistance, but rather ignominious for the brigade to find on arrival that they were only needed to hose a few red-nosed fire-eaters into sobriety. Then, again, there were those blue-stockings at Benslow, always up to mischief. In 1872, when Rachel Susan Cook (afterwards Mrs. C. P. Scott) took her tripos at Cambridge, the girls climbed on to the roof and rang the alarm bell with such vigour that the engines were rushed out (993. 274). On another occasion, as recently as 1903, the brigade was called to Russell's Slipe, only to find, on reaching that difficult suburb with the fire-escape, that there was a rabbit-hutch on fire.

In addition to these vexations there were those tiresome ratepayers who 'wanted to know' why the firemen didn't put out each and every fire, and who at the same time did all they could to oppose the purchase of new appliances. It was the old tale over again:—

> 'When fire rages and danger is nigh,
> To God and the firemen people cry.
> The fire over, danger averted,
> God is forgotten, firemen slighted.'

On January 21, 1880, the second officer, being something of a sportsman, took the engine to Lax's pond and flooded the ice. 'The next thing we shall hear,' writes a scandalized inhabitant to the *Herts Express*, 'is that the engine has been used for window-cleaning, and for watering the streets during the summer months.'

In 1895, after twenty-eight years' service, the veteran Chalkley

relinquished his command, and Edwin Logsdon reigned in his stead. This also was a memorable reign, for Logsdon in his seventeen years' tenure of office is generally admitted to have brought the Hitchin brigade to a pitch of excellence unsurpassed by any other country brigade. One hears of the installation of electric fire-alarms, the introduction of monthly drills and monthly inspection of hydrants, the purchase of new hose, new uniforms, a curricle fire-escape, and, to commemorate the Coronation of Edward VII, the building of the present fire station in Paynes Park (x). These were the outward and visible signs of a man whose heart and soul were in the work, and who was constantly adding to his skill as a fire-fighter by association with the London Fire Brigade. With Second Officer Barham, Logsdon was frequently 'out' with the engines of the Metropolis, then under the control of Superintendent Pearce; and Pearce, in his turn, was frequently at Hitchin inspecting Logsdon and his men.

The only criticism ever made of this captain was in itself a tribute to his zeal. 'Fire appliances are best in use,' he blurted out on one celebrated occasion; 'the sooner we have another job the better.' That is a sentiment that lurks in every fireman's breast, but is not often uttered or expressed. It was certainly unwise of Logsdon to give expression to it, for he had none of the arts which enable a practised writer to say atrocious things in a safely ambiguous style; with him the hose was mightier than the pen. In the result he raised a hornet's-nest of outraged ratepayers. 'Are there not enough people committing arson in the world already,' they cried, 'without being encouraged, not to say aided and abetted, by the Hitchin fire brigade?' I for my part took him at his word and sent him a list of six unsightly shops and public buildings I wished to have destroyed. But I was disappointed. I waited and waited; but there was no outbreak of incendiarism after all; and slowly the embers of righteous indignation smouldered away.

In 1912, after fifty-one years' service as a fireman, Captain Logsdon died, as he had hoped to die, in harness, and had a fireman's funeral. As they were leaving the fire station the fire

x. It is worth recording that Logsdon, Barham and other members of the brigade collected over £600 towards the cost of the fire station, leaving another £111 only to fall upon the rates. The station was opened on August 20, 1904, by Lawson Thompson as Chairman of the H.U.D.C. The speeches on that occasion, which may be read in the *Herts Express*, are full of the past history of the brigade (947).

alarm rang loudly, and a dash was made to the Market Place to discover who had need of the firemen's services. But the alarms were intact. The telephones were examined later by the postal authorities, but no reason for the alarm was found. It was a strange occurrence, and one inclined to be superstitious (xi) might well imagine that the spirit of the old captain had thus summoned the comrades he loved so well to help him answer the last ' call ' he would respond to as a fireman.

X

Charles Loftus Barham, who succeeded Logsdon, was an engineer of wide experience on land and sea. His experience as a fireman extended over fifty years (xii), and in that period he attended over three hundred fires. There was something almost personal about his regard for the engines. He could not bear to leave them, or let any other person touch them. Nor would he leave his parish either, lest a call should come through and he should not be there. For the last thirty-four years of his life he refused to spend a single night away from Hitchin. Such devotion to duty deserved its reward, and it came in an appropriate form. In the last three years of Barham's life his soul was satisfied with three immense conflagrations such as Logsdon should have lived to see. That at the military hospital, Wrest Park, in the last year of the war, engaged the services of ten brigades; but Barham and his men had the honour of being retained when the others were dismissed, and their firemanship earned the unstinted admiration of Superintendent Burrows of London, who was standing by. At the burning of Ickleford Manor in 1919, when some £50,000 worth of damage was done, the Hitchin engine played on the fire for six consecutive hours, a ton of water being hurled on the mansion every minute. In spite of falling tons of masonry and streams of molten lead, which destroyed whole lengths of hose, the firemen stood to it

xi. That firemen are superstitious is well known. They hold, for example, that fires occur in a series of three, a superstition which our records undoubtedly support. And they do not laugh at those who say that the appearance of a hare in the streets of a town is an infallible omen of a fire.

xii. See the account of his jubilee as a fireman in the *Herts Express* of August 6, 1921. This was written by his son, also named Charles Loftus Barham, and gives valuable particulars of the principal fires in the district from 1871 to 1921 (954).

gallantly, and finally subdued the flames. At the third fire, which broke out at Danesbury House, Welwyn, on September 6, 1920, the efforts of the Hitchin, Welwyn and Hertford brigades were seriously impeded by the lack of water. The Hitchin steamer was worked from the River Mimram, over 1,200 feet away from and several hundred feet below the level of the mansion. Damage was done to the extent of £35,000.

It had always been Barham's aspiration 'to die a fireman,' and when he answered his last call in 1921 that wish was brought to pass. One feels it would be fitting to close with this survivor of the 'old brigade.' If we linger at all, it is only to name the captains appointed since his day: J. T. Chalkley, the efficient son of an efficient father, 1921; Arthur Foster, 1922; John Davey, 1922; Jacob Reynolds, 1926; Donald Powell, 1928; and to note the purchase of a 45-horse-power Mercedes motor tractor, carrying 1,950 feet of hose, in 1917; a new 'double vertical' variable expansion steamer, of 350-gallon size, from Shand, Mason & Co. in 1918; and a Morris Guy, 150–200-gallon engine fitted with a turbine pump, in 1924.

As the historian of this ancient and inflammable town, my last word undoubtedly should be one of gratitude. But for the Hitchin 'ingenears,' but for the Hitchin Fire Establishment, but for the Hitchin Fire Brigade, I should have been writing of antiquities long since consumed by fire, making the best of a mere modernity like Stevenage or Biggleswade or Potton. Time and again they have saved those Tudor and Jacobean buildings which are an historian's title-deeds. For centuries they have been safeguarding those muniment chambers in our mansions, those cupboards and lumber rooms in our Quaker habitations, where I have discovered the most precious of all my documents. But for them this History itself, with the thirty portfolios of notes—the slow ingathering of how many studious years!—that have gone to its making, might all have perished in one appalling night (xiii). It is that which has moved me to go beyond the appointed limits of this book and pay my tribute—however halting and imperfect—to these guardians of our homes, these preservers of our peace.

xiii. I have never been able to forget what happened at Luton, only nine miles away. There on July 19, 1919, the citizens went temporarily mad and sacked and burned their own Town Hall. The loss of the Corporation Records nearly broke the heart of William Austin, F.S.A., who was then engaged on his *History of Luton*.

CHRONOLOGY[1]

'"Tis time to observe occurrences and let nothing remarkable escape us; the supinity of elder days hath left so much to silence, or time hath so martyred the records, that the most industrious heads do find no easy work to erect a new Britannia.'—Sir Thomas Browne.

HE disadvantage of a narrative in subject form is that one has to dodge about, now forward, now backward, now sideways, as the theme's necessity decrees. Such a method has advantages; one explores many a beguiling byway and sojourns at many an ancient and garrulous inn. But there is no continuous progress upon the plain highway of history, with milestones and signposts to encourage the reader, and the word Finis from the beginning full in view at the orderly, inevitable end. The lack of these forthright qualities is still more apparent with writers like myself, who am obliged to confess along with Roger North, the prince of historiographers, that 'I have not always the punctualities of truth at my command, and may have erred in some points of chronography.' That is the reason, at all events, why I have thought it safer to set down here in processional order, precisely and without comment, the stubborn facts that have gone to make up the life-tale of this parish. Many of these were too stubborn to be shaped into the formal structure of this book, but they have an interest and value all their own which it would be foolish to overlook. Moreover, in the long-drawn-out pageant of fifteen hundred years, which this chronology affords, the oddest events seem somehow to fall into line with the rest, their crude colours and wild apparel growing subdued in the general company, and sinking down at last into the quiet harmony of the whole.

Here, at all events, the curious spectator may trace, as it were step by step, such progress as this old township has struggled to attain from its beginnings until now. At first, in but a ghostly glimmer or twilight of memory as the gigantic body of Hicca looms out of the mist and lurches down the Icknield Way, or

1. I wish to express my indebtedness to William Onslow Times, C. J. Widdows and C. L. Barham for assisting in the compilation of this chapter.

THE COOPERS' ARMS: BACK VIEW

From a painting by J. C. Buckler, 1832

as one tries to catch what the bondmen are murmuring to each other as they drive their ox-teams up and down the furrows in the Bury Field, or the tittle-tattle of the women at their spindles, or the hogs grunting and grubbing for beech-mast underneath the trees—all made so faint and difficult for modern eyes by the deadly iridescence of the past. Very slowly the darkness begins to recede and lets in some rays of sunlight upon the dim avenues of the past, but hardly at all before the death of Richard I, in whose heroic but unmethodical days the records were so vilely kept that antiquaries have been forced to fix there and then the limits of discoverable truth, the utmost backward of the time 'whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.'

Thereafter one lights with more certainty upon the solid lumber of the House of Fame; and by the fourteenth century not only lumber of palaces and court-leets and country manors, but cottage-lumber too, the common stuff of plain humanity. And so, marshalled with more regular array, the pageant moves slowly forward, with a firmer tread and a greater concourse of people, famous and infamous together, onward to these latter times when all that men do and say is chronicled, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

In the midst of modernity, however, we must be careful to call nothing common or unclean; for each insignificant event in the infinite mosaic of history has its unfading colour and its perpetual function and effect. After all, the Dark Ages are behind us and the way lies ahead. Man, holding a doubtful fate in his hands, struggles forward through the gathering light to an end not yet in view. The philosopher would say he is hardly yet upon his feet, has scarcely begun to live. Who knows? It may be that this full-length history of a town we honour as so ancient is but the babbling incoherence of its infancy, the stammering prelude of a greatness still to be.

B.C. 55. The district of Hitchin, at this time inhabited by the tribe of the Catuvellauni, formed part of Belgic Britain under the rule of the same king as Belgic Gaul, and, soon after the invasions of Caesar (55 and 54 B.C.) and the storming of Cassivellaunus's stronghold, fell under the rule of the British king Tasciovanus, his son, whose capital was at Verulamium (near St. Albans), and, after him, of his son Cunobelinus (the Cymbeline of Shakespeare).

A copper coin of Cunobelinus has been found in a garden at Walsworth, and British urns of a rude type at the top of Benslow Hill (55. 431).

A.D. 43. After the campaigns of Aulus Plautius and Claudius and the defeat of Caractacus, the son of Cunobelinus, the district about Hitchin came under direct Roman rule (55. 428).

62. The Catuvellauni tribe about Hitchin joined in the revolt of the Iceni under Queen Boadicea. Having sacked the Roman colony at Camulodunum (Colchester), they retreated eastward and stood to fight the disastrous battle with Suetonius on a site conjectured by some historians to be between Hitchin and King's Walden. Tacitus states that there was a forest at the rear of the Romans who came from London, and an open plain in front, which description, as Middlesex and most of Herts down to our borders was then forest, seems to point to our open country (55. 428).

193–392. In a part of the open fields called the Fox-holes there was discovered about 1875 a Roman cemetery with a large number of sepulchral urns, dishes, brooches, knife-blades, bronze ornaments, bracelets and coins of Severus (A.D. 193–211), Carausius (A.D. 293), Alletus (A.D. 296) and Constantine (A.D. 323–337). The Potters' names on the Samian ware discovered are Camius (A.D. 69–96), Lorius (*circa* A.D. 75), Montanus (A.D. 69–96), Ninus (A.D. 69–96), Paterclus (A.D. 80–120), Reburrus (A.D. 140–190) and Sambinianus (A.D. 90–150).

In 1884 William Ransom, F.S.A., unearthed a Roman villa at Purwell, on the eastern side of Hitchin. Altogether seven rooms were excavated, including the sudatorium or Turkish bath, the laconicum or vapour bath, the tepidarium or warm bath and a large room used for worship or for conducting the business of the house. Several of the walls were of herring-bone design, and some of the principal rooms were floored with tiles of a red pattern with parallel white lines and gridironed in the centre. Amongst the debris were found the bones of many wild and domestic animals, oyster shells, forty coins ranging from A.D. 193–392, bone pins, a band for a lady's hair, a stylus for writing on wax, a key, a bronze

TEMPLE DINSLEY

From a drawing by J. C. Buckler, 1832

steelyard and a curious perforated lid which was probably the top of a scent jar. A full description of the villa, and an account of other Roman remains in the vicinity of Hitchin, was published by William Ransom in the *Transactions of the Hertfordshire Natural History Society*, vol. iv, pt. 2, July 1886, pp. 39–48.

571. The country about Hitchin was conquered by the West Saxons; probably in the campaign noted in the Saxon Chronicle when 'Cuthwulf fought with the Brit-weals at Bedcanford (Bedford) and took four towns' (55. 428).

758. Offa built a palace at Hitchin after his battle with Beornred (Vol. I, 69).

792. Offa founded a religious house at Hitchin (Vol. I, 69).

878. At the treaty of Wedmore between Alfred and the Danes, the district of Hitchin was allotted to the kingdom of the Danish king Guthrum; in 937 it was again West Saxon territory.

885. Hitchin chosen to give its name to the Half-Hundred then formed by King Alfred.

910. Offa's monastery and part of the town destroyed by fire (Vol. I, 70).

944. Æthelgifu bequeathed certain lands at Langford to Ælfnoth on condition that he gave three days' provisions every year to the tribe of Hicca (Vol. II, 357).

980. At this period the district of Hitchin, together with the shires of Hertford, Bedford, Cambridge, Huntingdon and Northampton, formed the earldormanry of Æthelwine of East Anglia. Ecclesiastically it lay within the diocese of Dorchester (Oxon).

1062. Harold gave 'Hitchche and all field, pastures, meadows, woods and waters' to Waltham Abbey (Vol. I, 26).

1086. Hitchin entered in Domesday Book (Vol. I, 27).

1115. The north side of the church destroyed by a hurricane (Vol. I, 72).

1147. At the Chapter of the Templars, in the round Church of the Templars in Paris, Bernard de Baliol, Lord of Hitchin, granted to the Knights of the Temple of Solomon fifteen librates (about 780 acres) 'of my land which I possess in England in perpetuity, freely and without any custom, Wedelee by name, which is a member of Hitchin; fields rough and smooth, streams with woodland. And I make

this gift in the Chapter which was held at Paris in the Octaves of Easter, the Apostolic Legate Eugenius being present; and the King of France, and the Archbishops of Sens, Bordeaux, Rouen and Trascunnie and one hundred and thirty brethren, Knights of the Temple, arrayed in white cloaks.' Wedelee was the early name for Preston (ii) (155. 73).

1237. The chronicler Matthew Paris relates: 'Concerning a certain marvellous hailstorm and deluge in the daytime. In that same year, the Sunday before Pentecost, in the Chiltern district not far from the little town called Hicce, hail fell which was seen to exceed the size of wild apples; even sheep were prostrated, and rain-storms followed it daily.'

1292. The church partially destroyed by lightning and six years later by an earthquake (Vol. I, 74).

1292. John de Baliol, Lord of the Manor, crowned King of Scotland (Vol. I, 37).

1305. The church rebuilt (Vol. I, 75).

1308. The six Knight-Templars resident at Dinsley were arrested, two of them being sent to the Tower and the remaining four to Hertford Castle. The Order was suppressed in 1312. Twelve years later the Knights of St. John took possession of Temple Dinsley.

1311. By Royal command the town sent ten quarters of wheat, fifteen quarters of oats and ten hogs to Berwick-on-Tweed for the use of the King (Edward II) in his war with Scotland (Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1307–13, p. 81; 53. 19).

1317. Hitchin Priory founded (Vol. I, 126).

1321. The town furnished twelve footmen-at-arms for the general hosting of the war against the Scots and Robert Bruce their King. All contumacious persons evading payment of war service were ordered to be arrested (Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1321-4, p. 38; 53. 21).

1332. Hitchin town dispatched three archers to aid Edward

ii. Owing to lack of space the chapter on Temple Dinsley intended for this work has had to be abandoned. All the principal events, however, are recorded in this Chronology or elsewhere in this volume. The student who wishes to know more may be referred to the full-length account in the *Manor of Hitchin*, by Wentworth Huyshe (Macmillan), 1906. An admirably illustrated account of the mansion by Sir Lawrence Weaver appeared in *Country Life*, April 22, 1911.

HITCHIN FROM THE AIR, 1927

Showing Bucklersbury, Sun Street, and the Market Square

Baliol in his claim to the Kingdom of Scotland. They fought in the decisive Battle of Perth (53. 22).

1337. All the bows and arrows in the hands and custody of the workmen of the town were purchased for the King's use, and delivered to John de Thorpe, King's clerk, for urgent use in the war with Ireland (Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1334–8, p. 524; 53. 25).

1342. The wool-merchants of Hitchin supplied five sacks of wool, their proportion of the county levy, to Master Paul de *Monte Florum*, a Jew who had financed the King's war in France, ' for the redemption of the King's great crown and certain other jewels ' then in pledge to him (Cal. Close Rolls, 1341–3, p. 558; 53. 26).

1346. Writ to the Bailiff, goodmen and commonalties of Hych to array two men-at-arms without delay, and cause them to be brought to Portsmouth so that they might be there on the Sunday in mid-Lent at the latest. N.B.—The Battle of Creçy was fought in August. Along with the two men-at-arms went Andrew Hytchen, a Carmelite friar from Hitchin Priory, who served as chaplain, and was subsequently rewarded by King Edward III ' for his good services in the war of France.'

1349. The Black Death was so severe at Hitchin that one of the streets was afterwards given the name of Dead Street (Vol. I, 42).

1350. About this time the trestle stalls on the lower or south side of the great open market began to take on a more fixed and permanent character. The encroachment spread until by 1450 the whole space between what is now Sun Street and Bucklersbury was lost to the market and covered with timbered and tiled shops. See the view from the air of this densely packed district, where the house-tops are still reminiscent of the canopies of the original stalls.

1362. Sir Edward de Kendale founded a religious house of the Gilbertine Order at the Biggin (Vol. I, 150).

1375. The manor granted to Alice Perrers, mistress of Edward III (Vol. I, 38).

1399. Peter Stokes, famous Carmelite preacher, died (Vol. I, 137).

1410. A cloth-making industry established in Hitchin about this time.

1415. At the field of Agincourt, Edward, Duke of York, the Lord of Hitchin Manor, was killed. He had been given the post of honour as leader of the vanguard. The rear was commanded by Thomas Beaufort, youngest son of John of Gaunt, who in right of his wife was Lord of Maydencroft Manor. Several of the inhabitants of Hitchin Hundred fought as gentlemen-at-arms or archers in Sir Walter Hungerford's famous Company. There was Nicholas Poyntz of Hexton; Henry Croke, brother of the Rector of Lilley; Wanter of Charlton; John Rous, whose ancestor Adam had been a benefactor to the Priory; Richard Lye, a chaplain attached to Hitchin Church; and John Trystram, who held the post of 'Purveyor to the King's Household, King's Falconer and Contrarimator,' i.e. beater on the other side of a river when the King went hawking.

1450–1460. Building of the South Chapel and extension of the chancel of the Church (Vol. I, 81). *See* Buckler's drawing opposite this page.

1453. Insurrection at Hitchin under the leadership of John Sturgeon (Vol. I, 40).

1475. Foundation of the Hitchin Brotherhood or Gild (Vol. I, 82).

1487. Ten archers sent by Hitchin town to aid the King, Henry VII, in suppressing Lambert Simnel's rebellion (53. 30).

1493. Ralph Austrey or Ostrich of Hitchin was this year Lord Mayor of London. He was a member of the Fishmongers' Company and afterwards knighted by Henry VIII.

1500 *circa*. Building of the south porch of St. Mary's (Vol. I, 89).

1508. Fifty-two Hitchin men went off to serve in the war with Scotland under the command of Sir Thomas Lovell. William Pulter, the only gentleman required to serve, sent two men-at-arms to fight in his place (MSS. of the Duke of Rutland, K.G., vol. iv, 563).

1523–1525. Henry VIII narrowly escaped burning and drowning at Hitchin (Vol. II, 243).

1537. Letter from Sir Francis Bryan to Thomas Cromwell referring to the plague, which then raged through the country ('they die here in every corner'), stating that Hitchin is as yet clear, and it would be safe for the King to

ST. MARY'S: VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-EAST

From a drawing by J. C. Buckler, 1832

come there on his way to London (L. & P. Hen. VIII, 12, pt. 2, 275).

1538. Surrender of the Gilbertine Convent at the Biggin by Prior Mounton (Vol. I, 159).

1539. Surrender of the Rectory of Hitchin by the Abbess of Elstow and of the Priory by Prior Butler (Vol. I, 95, 144).

1540. At the invitation of Henry VIII, Ralph Radcliffe set up his school at Hitchin Priory (Vol. I, 147).

1542. Grant of Temple Dinsley to Sir Ralph Sadler (79. 10).

1544. Ten Hitchin men under John Pulter went to take their part in the capture of Boulogne. They were shipped from Harwich, for, as the State Papers say, 'they die sore at Dover and Rye.' The next year a 'benevolence' was levied on the town and county for the maintenance of the war with France and for the reinforcement of 'Bologne much decayed by deth.' Some wheat was also sent from Hitchin market, and orders posted there from the Privy Council against 'such as store corn for their private lucre' (53. 36).

1548. Possessions of the Hitchin Brotherhood or Gild seized into the King's hands and sold (Vol. I, 96).

1575. In the last three months of this year, according to an entry in the parish registers, fifty inhabitants of Hitchin perished of the plague. As their names are not recorded amongst the burials, it is supposed that the victims were interred, not in the churchyard, but in a pit elsewhere.

1576. The tolls of Hitchin Market, the two fairs and two mills were reported to be of the value of £40 per annum. The mill called Malt Mill, leased to Ralph Radcliffe, was valued at £7 by the year.

1577. John of Hitchin ordered to furnish for the wars in the Netherlands 'twelve hable and sufficient persons, being of agilitie and honest of behaviour between the age of XIX and XLI yeres, which are fit to be trayned for harquebus shott, everye one of them havynge a morrion, a sworde and dagger and a caliver with sufficient furniture and powder for the same.' The Certificate of the Musters in the County of Hertford this year gives the following return for the Half-Hundred of Hitchin: 'Hablemen 234, hablemen trayned 9, corselletes 13, almain rivetts 8, cotes of plate 6, murryons 13, saletts and steel capps 26, pikes 13,

blackbills and halberds 20, callivers and harquebutts 13, longebowes 26, sheves of arrowes 26' (Cal. S.P.D. Eliz., vol. cxvii, No. 7).

1588. The sum of £19 6s. 4d. was collected in Hitchin towards the fitting out of the English Fleet against the coming of the Spanish Armada.

1588. 28 July. The Trained Bands of the county being selected to serve as the bodyguard for the Queen's person, the Hitchin contingent under the command of Captain, afterwards Sir, Rowland Lytton, marched to Tilbury Fort, the Armada having sailed a few days before. Captain Thomas Sadler of Temple Dinsley was in charge of the horse. *See* the portrait of Captain Lytton in his armour opposite this page.

1601. Feb. 15th. By reason of the Earl of Essex's rebellion and the grave danger to the Queen's safety, Sir Robert Cecil commanded the High Constable of Hitchin to proceed with the Trained Band of the Half-Hundred by night to Holborn to 'the place of rendez-vous.' On the day of Essex's execution 'they guarded the courtyard at Whitehall by day and night.'

1632. What is now known as the Grammar School was this year founded by John Mattock, his purpose being 'to teach and instruct and train up the children of the inhabitants of Hitchin in good literature and virtuous education for the avoiding of idleness, the mother of all vice and wickedness.' There is a tradition in the town that, before this foundation, a small class was held in the sand-dells—the teachers of those days tracing the alphabet in the sand.

1636. The Justices report to the Judges of Assize: 'There have dyed of the plague in the towne of Hitchin from the IXth of September to the IIIrd of November, all in the famylyes of poore people, 22. Houses which have byn infected, 13. Raised by the Overseers of the poore in this tyme of ye visitation, £128, besides the charges of six watchmen and one officer with them every night, and besides dailye reliefe from the houses of the able and well-disposed. During this tyme wee forbore to call the countrye to the monthlye meeting, but wee deputed fower of the principall inhabitants to be overseers of the Orders published by his Majestye's Commandment, and wee ourselves did weekly

SIR ROWLAND LYTTON

From a portrait at Knebworth House

THE OLD FREE SCHOOL

From a drawing by J. C. Buckler, 1832

meete to see them put in execution.' W. Lytton, Arthur Pulter, Francis Taverner.

Amongst the Herts Quarter Session Rolls is a petition from certain ' very poor men ' of Hitchin who in this time of plague were entreated to ' keepe ' their houses, which they did upon promise of relief. ' We are now being forced to part with such things as we have to our utter undoing if some relief is not forthcoming ' (72. 5. 231).

1642–1648. Hitchin fought on the Parliamentary side in the Civil War (Vol. I, 181–207).

1650. Purchase of Hitchin Manor by Samuel Chidley, Fifth-Monarchist and pamphleteer (Vol. I, 212).

1660. In memory of the Restoration of King Charles II, Sir Thomas Byde gave the two sundials on the south side of the church tower.

1660–1672. Bunyan's preaching tours in the Hitchin district (Vol. II, 56).

1662. George Atwell, in his book *The Faithful Surveyor*, published this year, tells how wonderfully the barley in Hitchin parish had been improved by the new custom of the farmers who, when sending their wagons of malt to London, returned laden with old rags and horn shavings, which they first laid in heaps like dung and then ploughed into the soil. In a space of thirty years the value of the local barley was raised from £4 an acre to £9. Atwell also advises malt dust, scouring of old ditches, and marl for spreading on the land.

1665. The plague raged this year in every part of Hitchin with the exception of Tilehouse Street. It is stated in an early history of the town that every man, woman and child in Dead Street (now Queen Street) perished. In the year 1853 a large number of skeletons, buried only two feet deep, were discovered behind No. 40, Queen Street, with several coins upon them dated 1660. There were relics of leather shoes on the feet of some of the skeletons, which gives a grim reminder of the suddenness of the seizure of those who died, and the indecent haste with which they were buried. It is also recorded that the vicar of that day, William Gibbs, accompanied by his Clerk, used to kneel down and pray for the sick and dying outside their dwelling-houses, the windows being thrown open that the sufferers

might hear. According to another contemporary account, 'a young man at the Brotherhood House, becoming frantic through the violence of the disease, was locked into his room. He contrived, however, to break his way into the chamber below, when, seeing his mother lying dead in her bed, he became so terrified that he rushed out naked into the street, where he was pursued and shot at, lest he should spread the contagion. He escaped from his pursuers into the Priory Park, where he lay down amongst some sheep, which had such a salutary effect on him that the delirium subsided and he returned home and recovered.'

Apart from those buried wholesale in Queen Street the church registers show that 36 were buried in August, 55 in September, 52 in October, 23 in November, and then a great drop to 6 in December. Cold weather killed the plague. 'He had been told as a young man,' said John Hill (1711–1746), a Baptist minister born at Hitchin, 'that this visitation of the Lord was brought upon the town through the instrumentality of Lydia Tuppenny, a most notorious harlot of the time.' As early as July the Justices had met to consider the problem of checking those plague-ridden people who came streaming out of London, and John Papworth of Hitchin was one of those Grand Jury men who on July 10th presented that 'severall persons doe dayly come downe from the cytie of London in great numbers with their families and goods to inhabitt in severall places in our countie to the great danger of infecting the same.'

1666–1672. John Skynner's almshouses in Bancroft, erected at a cost of £271 on a piece of ground called Benn's Mead given by Sir Thomas Byde. The Ralph Skynner almshouses were added in 1698; and an endowment provided for the maintenance of eight poor, aged, impotent people of Hitchin.

1670. Depositions were taken on commission at the sign of the Bell at Hitchin to determine the privileges of the King's mills known as Portmill and Shackling Mill, and the legal position of those private mills known as Charlton, Purwell, Oughton, Cadwell and Hidemill, which for some years past had presumed to grind the corn of the manor tenants and at a price 'one penny in the bushel less than the constant rate of grinding hath alwayes been.' The wit-

SKINNER'S ALMSHOUSES

From a drawing by J. C. Buckler, 1832

nesses called were John Bruton, Edward Pryor, Edmund Papworth, Bennet Collisson, Thomas Ansell and George Mann (Depositions taken under Commission, 22 Charles II, Easter, No. 24, Co. Hertford).

1676. Survey made of Hitchin Manor. It reported that there were 600 houses in the parish and 217 owners.

1677. Bunyan's friend, John Wilson, became first pastor of the Hitchin Baptists (Vol. II, 70).

1679. By command of the Duke of Monmouth, then Commander-in-Chief of the King's Forces, Hitchin was appointed an Army recruiting and quartering centre.

1680 *circa*. The first fire engine purchased (Vol. II, 386).

1690. The first Independent chapel built (Vol. II, 102).

1692. The first Tilehouse Street chapel built (Vol. II, 74).

1716. Some Jacobites, who had been concerned in the rising of the year before and had since been in hiding, were this year taken at Preston and conveyed to London for trial.

1720. James Bogdani, the Hungarian painter, became lessee of Hitchin Manor (Vol. I, 61).

1730. 158 people died of smallpox. The market was for the time being held in Butts Close, but the dealers were not allowed to come near each other. They left their goods or money at an appointed place.

1738. The last marriage performed at Minsden Chapel (Vol. II, 35).

1739. George Whitefield preached at Hitchin (Vol. II, 113).

1741. A survey of the parish made by John Davis.

1750. Eugene Aram an usher at the Church School (Vol. II, 316).

1757. The Hitchin, Shefford and Bedford Turnpike Trust created (Vol. I, 291).

1759. A Royal warrant issued for the raising of a regiment of light dragoons by Lieutenant-Colonel Hale of King's Walden, who after much distinguished service had brought to England the dispatches telling of the death of Wolfe in the fight on the Plains of Abraham, he himself having taken a brilliant share in the action at the head of the 47th. These were afterwards styled the 17th Lancers, and have become famous as ' the Death or Glory Boys,' and as one of the five regiments which took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade. The recruits were ' to be light and straight, and by no means gummy,' and were to receive a bounty of three

guineas on enlistment. The regiment was recruited up to its establishment by Colonel Hale within the space of seventeen days, mainly from the Hitchin district and entirely from the county. Captain Hinde of Hunsdon House, Preston, was second-in-command; he subsequently wrote an account of the formation and war service of the regiment.

1761. Daniel Warner rebuilt the almshouses in the churchyard at his own cost 'for the warmer and better comfort of the poorest widows or ancient couples of this town.'

1770. The New Assembly Rooms at the Sun were built and used for the meetings of the Justices in Petty Sessions.

1775–1780. William Gordon, D.D., an Independent minister born at Hitchin, emigrated to America; and, after serving as pastor of the third church at Roxbury, Massachusetts, became private secretary to General Washington. In 1788 he published *The History of the Rise and Independence of the United States* (Vol. II, 123).

1780. Local petition sent to Parliament pointing out the disastrous effects of the American War, and requesting 'that before any new burthens be laid upon the country effectual measures may be taken by that House to inquire into and correct the gross abuses in the expenditure of public money; to reduce all exorbitant emoluments; to rescind and abolish all sinecure places and unmerited pensions; and to appropriate the produce to the necessities of the State.'

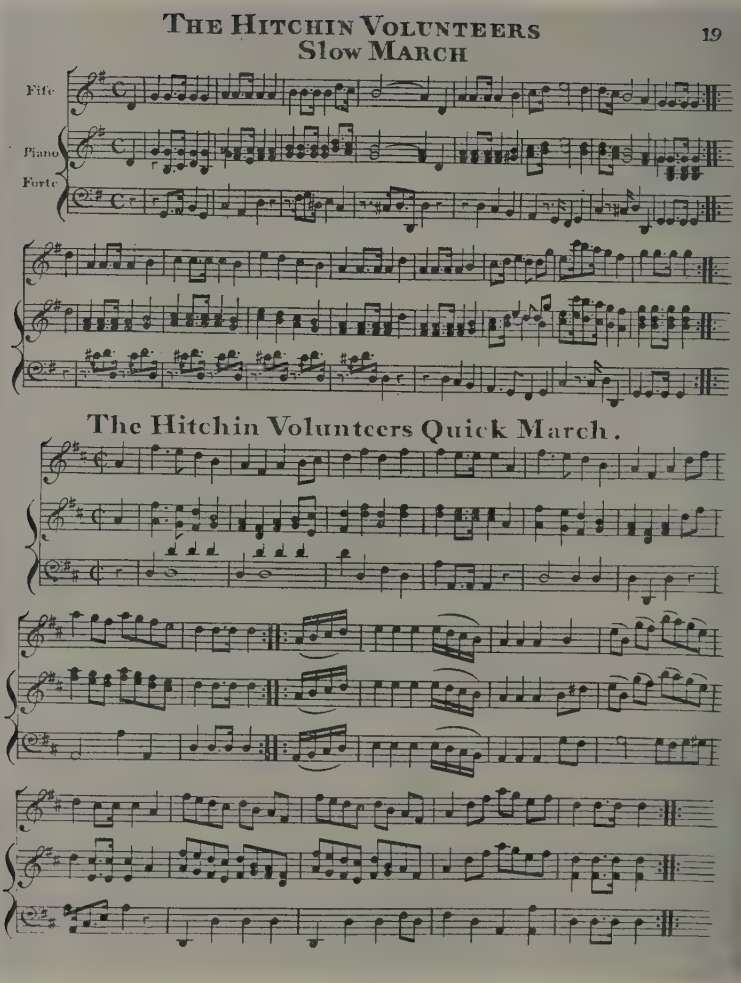
The same year the Hitchin contingent of the Herts Militia was summoned to London to deal with the Gordon rioters.

1783. Thirteen incendiary fires within twenty weeks (Vol. II, 388).

1789. The Hitchin and Hertfordshire Bank established. It was afterwards known as Chapman, Pierson, Crabbe & Co.

1794. The Club Articles of the following societies were licensed at Quarter Sessions: (1) The Amicable and Brotherly Society at the Cock at Hitchin. (2) A like society at the Crown. (3) A Friendly Society at the Bull at Gosmore. (4) An Amicable and Brotherly Society at the Three Horse Shoes, Hitchin. (5) A like society at the Red Cow.

1795. (Feb. 9th.) A very sudden and destructive flood on a thaw after deep snow. John Geard says: 'It ran down Bridge Street in a torrent sufficient to drive a mill.' The landlord



From Bridgman's *Marches Composed for the Use of the Hertfordshire Volunteers*, 1800, p. 19

of the Sun Inn barricaded his entry with a dung-heap. The lower end of the churchyard was three feet deep in water. All the inhabitants of the Bridge Street quarter had their lower rooms inundated, and retreated like rats upstairs with their provisions.

1795. The Hitchin Cavalry went to Ware on account of a disturbance there, 'the servants of certain bargemasters and maltsters having unlawfully conspired to raise their wages and assembled in a riotous manner.'

1799. The Loyal Hitchin Association (afterwards called the Loyal Volunteers) received their Colours.

1800. Bread famine after a series of bad harvests. The quartern loaf up to eighteen-pence. Proclamation restricting consumption to one loaf per head per week.

1800. June 14th. The King reviewed the Herts Volunteers, Yeomanry and Militia at Hatfield Park, the Hitchin contingent under Captain Wilshere numbering seventy men.

1800. The smallpox raged. In the MS. diary of Sarah Crafton it is stated that 'John Dimsdale of Hitchin inoculated about 600 persons with the cow-pock, the latter end of this year.'

1801. Return of Hitchin parish at the first Census as containing 6,460 acres, 674 houses and 3,161 inhabitants, of whom 1,508 were males and 1,653 females.

1803. On the resumption of the war the Hitchin Volunteers again mustered under Captain John Crabb, Lieutenants James Nash, Joseph Eade and Ensign John Baron; and were attached to the Herts Local Militia, commanded by Colonel William Wilshere and Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Thomas Brand. Over a thousand pounds were collected in the town for their expenses.

1804. Four permanent butchers' stalls in the Market Square, opposite the Swan, were surrendered to the town by the owners, Charles Baron and Thomas Brown, and a barley market was established on their site.

1806. Under the direction of the Hitchin and Welwyn Turnpike Trust a cut was made in Hitchin Hill, lowering the road surface by about six feet. The wall of ox-horns at the foot of the hill was removed at the same time (966. 93).

1806. The Malt Mill, which stood about 50 yards north-west of the Priory (*see* Drapentier's Map, facing p. 17, Vol I), was pulled down this year, and Malt Mill Lane, which ran from

Charlton to Hitchin beside the river, through Sorrel Mead, was turned into its present course; a strip off the Priory grounds being added to the Willow Lane to widen it sufficiently for a cart or carriage way to be made into Tilehouse Street at Wratten. The extension of this road, past the Willows into the Luton Road, was the work of William Exton. In consideration of being allowed to make this diversion, the Delmé-Radcliffes bound themselves to keep the new road in repair, but this obligation was released when the family gave the Bath Spring to the town with the right to lay pipes through the park. The continuation of the old garden wall, consequent on the alteration of the road, was made partly, if not altogether, with the bricks of the old garden wall at Highdown. This diversion of Malt Mill Lane was originally conceived by John Radcliffe as part of his scheme for the improvement of the Priory estate. It was he also who had stocked the river with trout brought from Derbyshire, for which the carters and people going along the road, and poaching anglers generally, had reason to be grateful (966. 47).

1810. The British School founded by William Wilshere and the Hon. Thomas Brand, afterwards Lord Dacre. After 1826 the school was managed by a body of twenty trustees, ten of whom were to be Churchmen and ten Protestant Dissenters. New buildings for girls and infants were erected in 1857.

1811. At the Census this year Hitchin was found to contain 3,809 persons—an increase of 648 since the Census of 1801. The population was distributed as follows: Town, 3,044; Walsworth, 159; Bearton, 14; Charlton, 85; Preston, 260; Langley, 158; Hitchin Hill, 89. One hundred houses had been added in the ten years.

1811. The Hitchin Amicable Society founded by William Lucas, John Whitney, William Stanton and others, 'for enabling the subscribers the better to provide for the children nominated by them, or for their own benefit on the lives of such children.'

1811. The Hitchin and Auxiliary Bible Society founded. President: The Hon. Thomas Brand, M.P. Vice-Presidents: William Hale, Emilius Henry Delmé-Radcliffe, William Wilshere and William Hale, junior. Treasurer: Joseph

PLAN
of the
TOWN of HITCHIN
Herts
REFERENCES
a Church
b Free school
c Girls Charity School
d Lancastrian School
e Skynners Almshouses
f Warners Almshouses
g Biggin
h Priory
i Independent Meeting House
k Baptist Meeting House
l Quakers Meeting House
m Quakers Burial Ground
n Dirt Mill
o Workhouse
p Bridewell
Priory Park
Bridge Mead

Margetts Pierson. Secretaries: The Rev. Theophilus Humphries, the Rev. William Parry and the Rev. Jeremiah Owen. Committee: Samuel Allen, Thomas Brown, Joseph Eade, John Field, Thomas Hailey, George Hicks, Samuel Kirkby, William Lucas, Robert Newton, John Prior, Joshua Ransom, Joseph Rayner, Henricus Octavius Roe, Samuel Smith, Thomas Wilshere, John Whitney. The Hitchin Ladies' Bible Association was founded in 1819.

1813. The Crown sold its water mills by auction—Charlton Mill to William Bodger, and Grove Mill, formerly called Shotting Mill, to John Ransom.

1813. The New Book Society established, and the Hitchin Permanent Book Society shortly after. Most of their books were merged in the library of the Hitchin Mechanics' Institution when this was erected in 1860.

1813. Henry Bessemer, the inventor of a new process of manufacturing steel, was born in Charlton hamlet, Hitchin. He was knighted in 1879. The Bessemer process was introduced into the U.S.A. and developed by Alexander L. Holley, 1867–1870.

1814. A hot dinner, referred to in the accounts as ' The Hitchin Patriotic Dinner,' given to 1,300 poor people in Bancroft to celebrate the overthrow of Buonaparte and the Treaty of Paris.

1815. The Port Mill was pulled down, and a modern mill, containing a large store for grain and flour, was built upon its site.

1815. The Hitchin Provident Institution or Savings Bank founded by William Wilshere, Rev. Joseph Parsons, James Eade and others.

1816. A plan and valuation of the parish made by Messrs. Neale and Kimpton.

1818. The Hitchin Friendly Society founded by John Hawkins. It was dissolved in 1876.

1820. The windmill standing in the open fields between the Manley Highway and the Offley Road was removed bodily to a new site on the Gaping Hills, a distance of 450 yards. The ground from point to point was cleared and levelled of all fences, banks and ditches; and then the mill, being raised by screwjacks and a frame on four wheels being built under it, was pulled in full working order (stones,

machinery, sails and all) by thirty-six horses harnessed in six rows of six abreast. The schools were allowed a holiday to see this wonderful feat.

1821. At the Census this year the people numbered 4,486, showing an increase of 677 since the returns of 1811. Males, 2,088; Females, 2,398. The number of inhabited houses 886, occupied by 1,000 families. Families employed in agriculture, 345; in trade, 467; in other ways, 188. 'We attribute the increase,' say the Justices, 'in some degree to earlier marriages of the poor. Some have returned from the Army, and there has been a greater number of illegitimate children, but the principal cause has been the diminution of deaths as compared with births.'

1823. The Hitchin Dispensary established by Dr. Frederick Hawkins in Cock Street (now High Street, No. 14).

1824. (September 2nd.) 'This day,' says William Lucas in his diary, 'died William Wilshere, the most eminent public character of this town and neighbourhood; a man of great prudence and sagacity, who, as attorney and steward of many copyhold manors, acquired much wealth and influence. A very kind friend to the poor.'

1824. The rateable value of Hitchin assessed at £13,057 6s.

1825. 'We the inhabitants of the town of Hitchin at a meeting convened in consequence of the embarrassed state of the country at the present moment have come to the following Resolution: "That we have the fullest confidence in the stability and means of the Banking Houses in this Town and will support their credit to the utmost of our power, and hope by so doing to remove the groundless alarms of the timid, and to preserve this neighbourhood from the unreasonable panic which has been the cause of so much distress in other parts of the country."' Signed by Henry Wiles, Vicar, and ninety leading inhabitants.

1825–1828. Feb. 14th. William Lucas notes in his diary: 'This morning it was discovered that the corpse of a young woman who had been buried last 6th day the 11th in the Churchyard had been stolen from the grave, occasioning great affliction to her parents and much sensation in the town. I went to see the empty coffin; it remained at the bottom of the grave.' The registers of St. Mary's make it clear that the young woman was Elizabeth Whitehead of Bancroft, aged twenty-

ANCIENT COTTAGES FORMERLY IN PARK STREET

From a painting by Joseph Jackson Lister, 1826

one. After this case of body-snatching, one of a long series, it was decided to rail in the Churchyard. A sum of £500 was raised by subscription and the present iron fence erected. The work was carried out by H. S. Merritt, assisted by George Beaver, his apprentice, who tramped London for a week making sketches of similar enclosures.

1827. The Hitchin Friendly Institution founded by John Hawkins and others for the mutual relief and maintenance of the members in sickness, infancy and advanced age.

1828. The last hop-kiln dismantled. It stood near the east end of the churchyard. Hops were cultivated on the Bedford Road before that time.

1829. Petition of the 'Ladies of the Town of Hitchin' to King George IV, whom they fulsomely addressed as 'Your most gracious Majesty, the First Gentleman as well as the Greatest Monarch in Europe, whom no Lady ever fruitlessly appealed to, and from whose August Presence no Mother's or Widow's Heart ever returned without Leaping for joy,' etc. The purpose of the petition was to beseech him not to suffer the Papists to enter either House of Parliament, or hold any public offices under the Crown.

1829. Some of the houses standing in the middle of the Market Place were pulled down; the rest in 1851 and 1856.

1831. The Census return shows a total population of 5,211, females exceeding males by nearly 300. Inhabited houses, 997. Total number of families, 1,080, of which 347 were engaged in agriculture and 452 in trade.

1831. The ancient cottages in Park Street shown opposite this page were pulled down for road-widening.

1832. What William Lucas calls 'the pleasant piece of greensward called Russells Slipe' was developed.

1832. (July 12th and 13th.) Public dinner at the Sun and public subscription dinner given to the poor and labouring classes of Hitchin to commemorate the passing of the Reform Bill. Trestle tables were laid along Bancroft to seat 2,400 people; and 1,500 children were separately fed 'with a sixpenny plum cake.' The roast beef and plum pudding were only just consumed when, as William Lucas records, 'a grand storm of thunder and lightning and a deluginous rain' broke up the company and silenced the hired music from the City of London.

1833. A serious outbreak of cholera. Thomas Wilshere, writing on November 5th, says: 'We had five deaths yesterday. At present (1 o'clock) we have but one. The cases without a single exception have been confined to the labouring classes. You will imagine we are far from being comfortable. Really hearing the knells all day yesterday was most awful. I propose to go to Ely if the pestilence should increase' (952).

1834. The Wesleyan Chapel in Pound Lane, now Brand Street, was built by Thomas Ward. It was erected at a cost of £1,321 on a site purchased in 1829 for £700 by Thomas Hine, William Conquest and others. The first Superintendent was the Rev. William Davies. Originally attached to the Biggleswade Circuit, Hitchin became a circuit on its own account with Stevenage, Weston, Arlesey, Ickleford, Walkern and Pirton as its other members. In 1870 the chapel, which seats 500, was refronted and restored at a cost of £999. An organ was added in 1880 at a cost of £300. In 1898 an additional schoolroom and classrooms were erected at a cost of £1,865. The church membership in 1928 numbered exactly 100.

1834. Introduction of gas. In the first year the average consumption was 7,000 cubic feet per day, price 10s. per 1,000; in 1897 it was 150,000 cubic feet, price 3s. 3d. per 1,000; in 1929 it was 500,000 cubic feet per day, price 3s. 9d. per 1,000. In writing to Doctor Joseph Rix of St. Neots in 1833, James Daniell Morell, formerly of Hitchin, inserts this piece of news: 'I find they are going to make great improvements in the town of Hitchin, no less than laying the whole town with gas! This is a mark of intellect which I should not have expected there; but wonders never cease.'

1834. In the hope of reviving the ancient wool trade in the town, a wool fair was held in Bancroft on June 26th. Over 24,000 fleeces were brought into market, and at the farmer's Ordinary at the Sun 250 sat down.

1835. The Mechanics' Institute was founded, William Dawson being appointed Librarian and Instructor of the classes in grammar, arithmetic, geography, geometry and astronomy. The members for a time occupied a house at the top of Brand Street. The library was erected at a cost of £500 in 1861.

1838. The Cecil Lodge, No. 657 (since 1863, No. 449), was consecrated on May 19th at the Sun. It took its name from the Marquess of Salisbury, who was at that time Provincial Grand Master for Hertfordshire. William Lloyd Thomas was installed as the first Worshipful Master; Thomas Harwood Darton was invested as first Senior Warden, John Marshall as Junior Warden, and Henry Wiles, Vicar of Hitchin, as Chaplain. Amongst those initiated on the day of consecration were Frederick Peter Delmé-Radcliffe (first Director of Ceremonies), William Curling, Charles Times (first Secretary, 1838–1840, and Treasurer, 1847–1872), Samuel Hill and J. B. Geard. John Sugars was Secretary from 1841–1875; W. J. Fitch from 1875–1902; and J. H. Gilbertson from 1902 to the present date.

1838. Sixty-three inhabitants of Hitchin presented a petition in favour of a Low and Uniform Rate of Postage, and urged that a fair trial should be given to Mr. Rowland Hill's proposals. Hitchin at that time was a Post Town in the Eastern District. It appears from the second Report of the Select Committee of the same year that during the week commencing January 29, 1838, the number of letters and parcels posted through the Hitchin office was 538, made up as follows: 101 'General' ones, exceptionally prepaid by their senders, with 356 others to be settled for by the recipients upon delivery; 11 Penny Post or local letters, also to be paid for on delivery; and 70 franked or free communications. The newspapers totalled 39, and the receipts for the week on all business done amounted to £13 19s. 6d. The Postmaster, J. Bell, enjoyed a salary of £45, which, with 'fees on late letters, gratuities for private bags or pouches, Christmas-boxes, profits on money orders,' etc., sometimes rose to £53 4s. 9d. The annual expense of running the Hitchin P.O. is entered at £55 8s.

To show the growth of P.O. business in later years we may add that the average number of letters delivered per week by the Hitchin P.O. was 5,000 in 1859, 21,000 in 1897, and 52,000 in 1929 (iii).

iii. I am indebted for some of these particulars to my friend Arthur Fellows of Letchworth, a grandson of Sir Rowland Hill. He has made an exhaustive

1840. By the public spirit and benevolence of Dr. Frederick Hawkins the Infirmary was erected this year at a cost of £4,931. The Old Town Hall, of which Bellamy was the architect, and the Friends' Meeting House were completed the same year.

1841. Population returned as 6,125—an increase of 914, or nearly one-sixth, in ten years.

1843. The Loyal Albert Lodge of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity, established.

1844. The second Baptist chapel built at a cost of £2,432 (Vol. II, 95).

1845. Messrs. Sharples & Co., who had opened business in Bancroft in 1820, built the premises now occupied by Barclays Bank, Ltd., in the High Street. Of recent partners one may mention James Hack Tuke, who joined the Bank in 1851, retired in 1895, and died in 1896; Francis Lucas, who joined in 1856 and died in 1896; Frederic Seebohm, who joined in 1859 and died in 1912; Samuel Tuke, who joined in 1880 and retired in 1886; William Tindall Lucas, who joined in 1876; and Hugh Exton Seebohm, in 1891. In 1896 the Bank was absorbed in Barclays Bank Limited.

1846. An Act passed to provide a railway from Hitchin to Royston. The line was opened for traffic in October 1850.

1847. 'The London & York Railway,' writes Samuel Lucas, 'is getting on. Between Hitchin and Walsworth so many men are at work that the earth seems alive. Some pick down the chalk banks, others shovel the earth into carriages, and an old horse draws the carriages along the rail, and then tips them over. They have had two very bad injuries to the poor men. One had a very bad fracture of the leg from the falling of the chalk, and the other had his hand crushed between two waggons. Both of them were carried to the Infirmary.'

1847. First County Court held at Hitchin (Charles Times, Registrar).

1848. A notice published by the tradesmen of Hitchin that in future no shops would be open on Sunday.

study of the history of the G.P.O., and particularly of its local service. His MSS. can be consulted by serious students, and so can the copies in my possession.

From a coloured engraving by Edward S. Austin, 1840

1849. About this year Joshua Ransom established a silk mill, which employed three hundred persons. The factory was at Grove Mill, but failed a few years later (966. 148).

1849. Report to the Central Board of Health as to the sewerage, drainage and supply of water, and the sanitary conditions of the inhabitants of Hitchin, by William Ranger, C.E., Superintendent Inspector. From this it appears that there had been 1,700 cases of sickness in the preceding twelve months, of which 850 had been cases of typhus fever. Ten thousand visits had been paid in the town by the Medical Officer, and 12,000 parcels of medicine, in bulk about 250 gallons, distributed. The cost of these cases had been £587. 162 people had died, being about forty above the average death-rate. The report strongly condemned the open sewers in the streets, the contamination of the 92 wells in the town, the lack of waterclosets, of which there were only 59, and the fearful overcrowding, especially in Back Street. There were no less than 183 cottages containing one bedroom each. In one cottage a man and wife and seven children slept in a room 12 feet square. Window opening, 1 foot 9 inches by 1 foot 2 inches. The report also draws attention to the 38 fully licensed houses and the 21 beer houses in the town, and to the pauper population of 967, showing an increase of 582 in the space of six years (42).

1850. The G.N.R. line from Peterborough to London through Hitchin was opened on August 5th. One of the couplings broke on the first Parliamentary train, and eight coaches with their dismayed passengers were left behind. Shortly after the opening, Queen Victoria passed through, and the station was decorated with straw-plait to signify the local industry, just as at Biggleswade the platforms were decorated with carrots.

1850. A local Board of Health established under the Public Health Act of 1848. Hitchin was the second town in England to adopt its provisions. This was dissolved in 1856, and from that date until 1873 the town was managed by the Vestry. In 1873 a Local Board was established under the Public Health Act, 1858. After 1894 the Board became an Urban District Council.

1851. At the request of the Local Board of Health the Ordnance Survey Department made a survey of Hitchin parish.

1852. The Port Mill was purchased by the Local Board from Mr. Bodger for £1,600 and demolished.

1852. Walsworth school built by Mrs. Exton. In 1864 Mrs. Hailey endowed it with £1,000. In 1866 the management was transferred by Mrs. Barclay and Mrs. Seebohm to a body of trustees.

1853. The Corn Exchange was built at a cost of just over £2,000.

1853. Reservoir and engine-house built on Windmill Hill. The sewer was laid in the streets; and on Christmas Day the water from Charlton Bath spring was connected with the town. Total cost of these improvements, £14,000.

1854. St. Mary's Schools erected at a cost of £4,020 on ground given by Trinity College, Cambridge. In the same year St. Andrew's School was built through the enterprise of the Rev. George Gainsford on land given by Charles Willes Wilshere.

1855. The second Queen Street Independent, or as now styled 'Congregational,' chapel built (Vol. II, 132).

1857. The Cemetery was opened. With the extension, consecrated in 1879, it contains seven acres, and cost just over £3,000. The grounds were laid out by George Beaver. The first burial in the cemetery to be recorded on a tombstone was that of William Morgan, for forty-nine years sexton of St. Mary's. The Cemetery Road was constructed through the sand dells in 1871 at a cost of £986.

1857. The Hitchin Penny Bank founded by Samuel Lucas, Joseph Sharples, William Hawkins and Septimus Wright.

1857. Edward Pease, in his diary under April 25th, notes: 'Robert Stephenson' (i.e. George Stephenson's son) 'handed me a Hitchin Railway Bond to the amount of £5,000 for Joseph and myself. The bonds are at par, being 4 per cent.'

1859. The Mount Zion Chapel erected by the Particular Baptists.

1865. The Church of the Holy Saviour was built at the cost of the Rev. George Gainsford and consecrated on Ascension Day.

1868. The St. Saviour's Schools were opened.

1868. The Workmen's Hall was erected, and subsequently made the headquarters of the Blue Cross Brigade.

1868. The chapel known as Bull's Barn, occupied by the Particular Baptists, was sold by auction, purchased by Charles

BANCROFT IN 1865

From a photograph by T. B. Latchmore

Willes Wilshere and converted into St. John the Baptist Mission Church.

1869. The first telegraph wires were fitted on to the Post Office at the shop of John Beaver in the Market Place.

1869. At the house known as Benslow a ladies' college was established, and subsequently transferred to Cambridge under the style of Girton College (993).

1870. Bethel Chapel erected.

1874. By the generosity of Frederic Seebohm the town was enabled to make a convenient way from the Walsworth road to the middle of Bancroft by the straight cut known as the Hermitage Road. The bridge over the river was constructed by George Beaver.

1874. The Plait Hall erected at the corner of St. Andrew's Street by C. A. Bartlett. In 1898 the building was purchased for £350, and transformed into the St. Andrew's Mission Church. In 1928, at the time of the slum demolition, it was pulled down.

1876. The Walsworth Road Chapel was built by the Baptists, who had formed a separate Church there in 1869. Before the Chapel was built the congregation worshipped in an iron building, erected at his own cost by Richard Johnson, Chief Engineer of the G.N.R.

1877. The common fields in Bury Mead were enclosed, and those in Cock Mead nine years after.

1877. The Hitchin Blue Cross Brigade founded by Arthur Latchmore. It was dissolved in 1929.

1877. Died John Thompson, who for fifty years was Secretary of the British School. He was succeeded by his son, Lawson Thompson, who held office for forty years.

1877–1918. The Hitchin Rifle Volunteers re-formed as the 14th Herts Company under Captain Bailey Denton and Lieutenants C. W. Wilshere and Arthur Preedy; and later amalgamated with the 1st (Herts) Volunteer Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment. The Battalion furnished three companies for service in the South African War, and bore on its Regimental Colours 'South Africa, 1900–1902' by command of King Edward VII. It had the honour in 1901 of being selected as the only battalion to represent the Volunteer Army in the First Army Corps. In 1907 the Territorial Army was formed, and the 1st and 2nd Herts Volunteers

were amalgamated as the 1st Hertfordshire Territorial Regiment under the command of Colonel C. E. Longmore, who was subsequently awarded the K.C.B. In this amalgamation Major J. H. Gilbertson commanded the Hitchin Company.

The Herts was one of the first Territorial Regiments to go into the firing-line during the Great War; and under the command of Viscount Hampden fought at the first Battle of Ypres as part of the Earl of Cavan's 4th Brigade of the Guards. The 'Herts Guards' achieved the following battle honours: *Ypres*, 1914, 1917; Nonne Bosschen; *Festubert*, 1915; *Loos*; *Somme*, 1916, 1918; Thiepval; Ancre Heights; *Ancre*, 1916; *Pilckem*; Menin Road; Polygon Wood; Broodseindes; Poelcappelle; Paschendaele; *St. Quentin*; Rosières; Lys; Kemmel; Albert, 1916; Bapaume, 1918; *Hindenburg Line*; Cambrai, 1918; Solle; *Sambre*; *France and Flanders*, 1914–1918. The Honours in italics are borne on the King's Colour. In this Great War the Regiment lost 1,050, of whom 74 were Hitchin men.

1879. The Church Adult Class was established in the Old Free School by William Onslow Times.

1883. The Market Tolls, formerly owned by the Crown, were purchased for the Town at the price of £4,000.

1884. The Swan Inn, from which Kershaw's coach used to start, was this year sold to John Gatward, ironmonger, and the greater part of it demolished.

1885. A set of chimes, playing fourteen tunes, was installed in the church belfry through a legacy given by Thomas Gorham Pierson.

1885. A Police Court and Police Station were erected in Bancroft; and the Bridewell adjoining Skinner's almshouses was then closed.

1887. June 21. Jubilee Day. Massed service for children in the church. The Volunteers fired a *feu-de-joie* from the tower. Four hundred folk over sixty years of age were entertained in the Corn Exchange. A public dinner given to two thousand working people and their wives in Bancroft, the tables being ranged on each side of the street from Port Mill Lane as far as the Manor House.

1887. The first steam fire-engine purchased (Vol. II, 403).

THE MARKET IN BANCROFT

From a photograph by T. B. Latchmore, 1895

1888. Barracks for the Salvation Army erected in Florence Street.

1890. The Highbury, Benslow and Avenue district developed on land formerly known as the Nettledell Estate.

1891. Population returned for Census at 8,860.

1891. The new Hitchin Grammar School opened. The property purchased for the school was found to have belonged originally to the same John Mattock who founded the first grammar school in Tilehouse Street in 1632.

1895. A mission church dedicated to St. Faith was erected at Walsworth on ground given by Charles Willes Wilshere.

1900. July 11. The Church of St. Martin, Preston, built at a cost of £2,000, was consecrated by the Bishop of St. Albans. The architect was Thomas Carter.

1900. The Primitive Methodist Church built at a cost, including site, of £800. The first resident minister was the Rev. William Suttle.

1901. The Hitchin Society of Arts and Letters founded by Alexander Pulling. Hon. Sec., Wentworth Huyshe.

1901. A new Town Hall built at a cost of £7,300. Architects, Geoffry Lucas, F.R.I.B.A., and E. W. Mountford, F.R.I.B.A.

1902. The Roman Catholic Church of Mary Immaculate and St. Andrew was this year blessed by His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster.

1903. June 8th–14th. Abnormal rains. Six and a half inches in seven days. One period of sixty hours' continuous storm. Bridge Street and the lower parts of Hitchin nearly three feet under water.

1903. The Pig and Cattle Market in Bancroft closed, and the New Market in Nun's Close laid out at a cost of about £2,000; the land being leased for ninety-nine years from Trinity College at £40 a year.

1903. The Hitchin Debating Society formed. William Onslow Times, President; Thomas Adams, of Letchworth, Hon. Secretary. Dissolved in 1927.

1904. Caldicott School founded by J. Heald Jenkins and J. H. S. MacArthur.

1904. St. Michael's College founded.

1904. The Hitchin Brotherhood founded by the Rev. Clement F. Bryer.

1905. Died William Maylin, who had been born at Walsworth on August 3, 1803. He had 14 children, and left 270 descendants in a direct line surviving.

1907. The Sacred Heart Convent school founded on May 11th.

1907. New scheme for the administration of Hitchin Charities approved by the Charity Commission.

1907. The North Herts Permanent Mutual Benefit Building Society founded. First Secretary, W. F. Langford.

1908. The German Hospital built at a cost of £13,000, the foundation-stone being laid by Princess Louise Augusta of Schleswig-Holstein.

1908. July 25th. The Girls' Grammar School, built at a cost of £13,000, was opened by the Rev. Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. First head mistress, Janet E. Gosnell.

1908. Water Tower and Reservoir built on Windmill Hill at a cost of £12,000.

1911. The first, temporary church of St. Mark licensed for worship on December 25th.

1912. The Herts and Beds Bacon Factory established with a capital of £20,000.

1913. The Hitchin Playhouse built.

1914–1919. On the war memorial, and on pp. 447–449 of this History, are the names of two hundred and sixty men of Hitchin who made the supreme sacrifice. At sea the first casualty was the Rev. E. G. U. Robson, who went down with H.M.S. *Aboukir*, of which warship he was a chaplain. On land the first to fall was Sergeant Albert Clayton. Altogether eleven officers and twenty-four non-commissioned officers and men were decorated for bravery on the field, or for distinguished service on the various battle fronts. One of these, Second Lieutenant Frank Edward Young, was awarded the Victoria Cross. Of the 1,200 or so who enlisted from this parish, then numbering 12,000 souls, the majority served with (*a*) the Hertfordshires, who were specially mentioned in dispatches for their gallantry and sacrifice at the first and third battles of Ypres, at La Bassée and at the taking of St. Julien (see also under 1877); (*b*) the Bedfordshires, who were in the thick of the fighting on the Western Front from first to last, though their name is chiefly honoured for their brilliant stand at Ypres and

their valour at Neuve Chapelle; (*c*) the Hertfordshire Yeomanry, who took part in the Gallipoli, Egyptian and Mesopotamian campaigns, and had the distinction of being ' first in Bagdad.'

On the home front one should specially mention the work of the Voluntary Aid Detachment, the Hitchin branch of which had been efficiently organized by Mrs. Tindall Lucas before the war. A Red Cross hospital for convalescents was opened at The Maples in Bedford Road on April 15, 1915, Mrs. Clemens Usher being Commandant and Miss C. Tindall Lucas the first Sister-in-charge. Miss Phillips acted as quartermaster and Miss Bristow as assistant quartermaster. For their services at the same hospital Miss Unwin and Miss Tiddeman were officially mentioned in the last year of the war. In all some eight hundred patients, each staying on an average one month, received treatment from the Hitchin V.A.D. In addition, a Military Hospital was established at Benslow for the Royal Engineers, who, under Colonel J. A. Rose, were in training from January 1915 until the close of the war.

One should not leave unrecorded the work of the Red Cross Needlework Association, with its headquarters at the Grange; the Y.M.C.A. centres at the Old Town Hall and at the camp in Bedford Road; the Soldiers' Club at the Wesleyan Church; the force of Special Constables under the command of Section Leaders Arthur Hill and P. A. Sharman; the Hitchin Volunteer Training Corps for Home Defence under the command of Major J. H. Gilbertson; and the several food, fuel and pension committees and tribunals appointed to carry out the complex regulations of the civil and military authorities.

When this vast sacrifice of lives and this great record of service is fully reviewed Hitchin has cause for deep pride in the part it played in the Great War.

1915. The Hitchin Girls' Club founded at 23, Queen Street by E. Aillie Latchmore. In 1926 the Club moved to larger premises in Bethel Lane, and the management was transferred to a Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Theodore Ransom.

1918. A branch of the Young Women's Christian Association

formed. First President, Mrs. Tindall Lucas. Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Reginald Hine.

1919. First Hitchin Company of the Girls' Life Brigade founded by Miss Marjorie Russell.

1921. The population of the town returned for the Census as 12,829.

1921. Windmill Hill given by the Seebohm family to the town.

1923. Complimentary banquet given by G. W. Russell, Chairman of the H.U.D.C., to William Onslow Times to celebrate his fifty years' service as Clerk to the Hitchin Local Board and the Hitchin Urban District Council.

1926. St. Mary's Vicarage sold and a new vicarage built for £2,500 in Gray's Lane.

1926. A recreation ground given by Mrs. Smithson at the top of Tilehouse Street. One of the first recreation grounds to be restricted in its use to women and girls.

1927. The King's Cup won by the 344th (Hitchin) Battery of the Herts Yeomanry Brigade, Royal Artillery.

1927–1929. The Queen Street slums demolished.

1927–1929. Frederic Seebohm's house and garden purchased by John Ray, and shops built along the northern side of Hermitage Road.

1928. The Hitchin Arcade built.

1928. The Hitchin Library and the County Library amalgamated. The new library was opened by Alderman William Graveson of Hertford. George Spurr, Chairman of the Hitchin Urban District Council, took out as the first book Vol. I of *The History of Hitchin*.

1928. The Hitchin Rotary Club formed. First President, A. J. G. Lindsell. Charter granted June 10, 1929.

1928. The revaluation of the town under the Rating and Valuation Act, 1925, showed an increase of 32·5 per cent. on the previous valuation in 1900 and a total rateable value of £96,252.

1929. The old Town Hall converted into Council Offices at a cost of £2,000.

1929. The Bancroft Recreation Ground laid out at a cost of £8,000.

1929. A new wing added to the Hitchin Hospital at a cost, including equipment, of £7,500; and opened by the Duchess of York. Between 1913 and 1929 over £30,000 was spent on improvements at the Hospital.

VIEW OF HITCHIN FROM THE ROOF OF THE WATER TOWER

From a photograph by T. W. Latchmore, 1927

CONCLUSION

I

ND what's the use of it all, anyway?' That was the question put to me by a fellow-townsman as I sauntered beside him through the streets of Hitchin with a fragment of this History underneath my arm. An unpleasant question—one that comes to us all, I suppose, whatever our walk in life, one that has been asked in turn of all the works of men and even of life itself.

It is no longer the fashion to write prologues or epilogues to books; the reader must be left to draw his own conclusions. But I was brought up in an old-fashioned school. If I may not write a *Farewell* like old Fuller, or a page of *Reflections* like my predecessor Dunnage, I will at least have my Hind-word, or Hine-word; and I will employ it (I hope not unprofitably) in answering that searching question. It does seem to go to the root of the whole matter.

'What's the use of it all?' Well, first of all there is the pleasure of it. I am one of those who in this vale of tears would place a high value on pleasure. And here in this animated scene of parish life, with Tom, Dick and Harry interacting with the parson and the squire, I think you have the human comedy perfectly displayed. For the writer, and in a measure for his readers, there are additional pleasures: the romance of research, the pure delights of discovery, the joy of a tale that is told.

Secondly, there is the instruction of it. Years ago, in the Introduction to this work, I claimed that a parish history, properly conceived, was *speculum mundi*, a little mirror of the world; and now at the end of my labours I would repeat that claim. This clod of ground, this piece of England, this speck of the universe, does it not contain in microcosm all we need to know? The far-fetched wonders of the earth, are they not here all the time, here at our very feet? The trail of man's Odyssey, is it not blazed in Hitchin soil?

Some of my readers, too hurriedly turning the pages, may have said in their haste: 'Here is a medley of disjointed things,

a chronicle disordered and confused.' I might answer, 'Is not life the same? Did the course of History ever yet run smooth?' But those who read steadily and see the whole will, I think, discern a little community of people, pastoral in their pursuits and originally free, falling under bondage to one after another of the marauding nations from oversea; yet even in the House of Bondage maintaining the old speech, the stubborn English characteristics, the love of their Hitchin fields. You can see the waves of adversity breaking over their heads: wars and famines and plagues, persecutions, oppressions and plunders; but nothing daunts their indomitable minds; they emerge at last, bloody but unbowed, masters in their own house, the light of freedom in their eyes. Is not that instructive?

Look back over the centuries upon some of the works they wrought. Observe the drift-ways and cattle-tracks as they evolve into the King's highway; the pack-horses supplanted in turn by the carrier, the coach, the railway; the cottages of wattle and daub giving place to 'fayre houses of tymber'; the parish church, set in the midst, expanding like a lovely flower, with aisles and chantries and chapels; a market abounding more and more with corn and malt and wool; a fair that draws merchants and pedlars from the Hundred, from the county, from all over the three shires; a gild whose masters and wardens, 'rich men furnished with ability,' rule over the crafts of the town. To me that is a spectacle both instructive and inspiring.

Mark, above all, the progress of these latter days—the achievement of the Worthies of the last century, who have made Hitchin what it is. They found an evil-smelling, plague-ridden, unlit and unenlightened town—a place where of necessity the life of the citizens was 'mean, nasty, brutish and short.' All honour to these Quakers, these philanthropists, these members of the Local Board and of the Urban Council. It is to them we owe our good roads, our fine water, our sewers, our gas and electric light; our hospitals, libraries and town-halls, our savings banks, friendly societies and nursing institutions; our open spaces and our playing fields. We do well to be proud of our past. We are not ashamed of the part we have played historically this last thousand years. But we rejoice to have put our ancient house into order; and we are ready now and well equipped to meet the problems of to-morrow.

II

Thirdly, and now to beg the question, there is the usefulness of it. In this matter let no one be misled by the pronouncements of the historians; for when they pass judgment on History they do but pass judgment on themselves. How could you expect Thucydides, for example, to look on History otherwise than as the merciless delineation of disasters; he was the slave of his own style. How could you expect Gibbon, with his bloodless objectivity, to find in it anything but 'a register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind'? How could you expect Lord Balfour, with his Humeian indifference, his icy, philosophic condescension, to utter any other verdict on humanity than his 'disreputable episode on one of the meaner planets'? If an average, warm-hearted man like James Howell acclaims History as 'that great treasury of Time and promptuary of heroic actions,' he is parodied by a misanthrope in horn spectacles who derides it as 'that great catalogue of crime and prompter of dishonest factions.'

I am of those—happily a growing number—who say that History is not an epic, nor a philosophy, but a pageant. Whether that pageant moves on to some far-off divine event I do not know. Who knows? All one can say is that it appears to gather meaning and momentum as it travels down the ages. Some are inclined to make a larger claim. In the study of History, they declare, you have not only a clue to the complexity of the past, but a sure and certain guide to the problems of times present. Possibly that may be so; yet Man cannot always be peering over his shoulder at the past as he staggers forward into the future. He must take heed to his own steps. He must put trust in his own star.

The usefulness I claim lies deeper. For though the study of History should not avail to cure these present discontents, it does at least endue us with understanding, patience and equanimity; and these are qualities of incalculable value in the conduct of human affairs. In my judgment it is just those who have been scornful of the past who are the first to miss their footing into the future; it is just those who praise famous men and ponder over their experience who learn to order their own lives aright and leave the world the richer for their passing through it.

* * * * *

I have come up on to Hitchin Hill to write these valedictory lines; the same hill that Chapman climbed in 1611 to finish his master-work. They say that here in his native air 'the learned shepheard of faire Hitchinge hill' completed his translation of the last twelve books of Homer's *Iliad* in fifteen weeks; whereas I over my little Hitchin *Iliad* have laboured for fifteen years. Good it was for Chapman to come here out of the distraction of the London streets, away from the battle of wits and his boon companions at the Mitre; and good it is for me to have ransacked the last library, to have scanned the last manuscript, to have put the last portfolio away.

Under the shade of these elms how pleasant to lie at ease and brood over this beloved town. It looks so tranquil in the evening air, and at this distance there is not a sound. You can hardly believe that battle, murder and sudden death, sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion, have ever happened here. And yet, they say, if you put your ear to the grass you can still hear the countless generations marching by: British and Roman and Saxon, Danish and Norman and all. Alas that the 'iniquity of oblivion hath blindly scattered her poppy'; for it was the hands of these forgotten dead men that fashioned the little town we dwell in. They have deserved to be remembered of us.

Well, I have done my best to recall their memory; and at least I may claim to have dealt gently with their remains. If there is anything I abhor, it is the spirit of those prying antiquaries, without a spark of piety in their nature, who rummage into the past out of a rifling and critical disposition; 'troublesome vexers of the dead,' as Bishop Earle called them, 'which after long sparing must need rise up to the judgment of their castigations.' For us surely the first thought and the last thought should be one of gratitude: 'Others have laboured and ye have entered into their labours.'

The sun with a last benediction rests tenderly upon the little town; then dips under Lilley Hoo. The long cool shadows creep up the valley of the Hiz—forerunners of a trailing mist that soon will fold everything to sleep. From Shillington and from Graveley the rooks come home in thousands to their ancestral trees. The larks in high heaven have sung their *Nunc Dimittis*. It is time to salute the spirit of the place and go.

Listen! There is St. Mary's bell; and it ringeth to evensong. Let us make haste, for there is a prayer to be said in the Trinity

Chapel; and not only by myself, but by all good citizens of this town, and by all those who are piously disposed amongst the readers of this book: 'Eternal and ever-blessed God, who hast made us the heirs of many ages, and set us in the midst of many brethren, deepen our gratitude for Thy blessings as we have received them from our fathers, our benefactors and our friends. May we never forget the kindness which surrounds us in the present, nor be unmindful of the treasures we inherit from the past; but, having a lively sense of our debt to the brethren and a loving remembrance of departed generations, may we reverently carry forward the work of the ages and daily endeavour, as faithful stewards, to enrich the same by a good conversation and a godly life.'

FOOT'S WAGON

APPENDICES

NOTE

By reason of the prohibitive cost of printing the author has been compelled to exclude the Appendices on Geology, Archæology, Botany, Ornithology and Entomology, prepared by E. F. D. Bloom, M.A., B.Sc., J. E. Little, M.A., and Arthur Foster, F.E.S., M.B.O.U.

It is hoped to publish these studies with others in a volume entitled *The Natural History of Hitchin*, of which the subscribers to this *History* will receive a prospectus in due course. The price will be approximately five shillings.

THE VICARS OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF HITCHIN

N.B.—The Dates are according to the New Style.

Name.	Institution.	Patron.	Authority.
Thomas of Suffolk	1220–1	Elstow Abbey	Lincoln Record Soc. IX, 35
William de Diston	1249–50	Elstow Abbey	Lincoln Record Soc. IX, 297
Robert	(died 1305)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. II, f. 236
Robert of Ketteringham	22 Jan., 1306 (died 1330)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. II, f. 236
Robert of Felmersham	24 Aug., 1330 (resigned 1332)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. IV, f. 373d
John Seyer	30 Nov., 1332 (resigned 1355)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. IV, f. 377d
Ralph Alisundre	13 Feb., 1355	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. IV, f. 401d
William Smyth	(resigned 1375)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. X, f. 310
John Hogges	5 Nov., 1375 (resigned 1382)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. X, f. 310
John Scalam	10 March, 1382 (resigned 1384)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. X, f. 331
John Lamasse	20 July, 1384 (resigned 1388)	Elstow Abbey	B.M. Add. MSS. 5829, f. 194b
Thomas Legh	18 Nov., 1388	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. XI, f. 257d
Nicholas Pope	8 May, 1400	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. XIII, f. 269d
John Ayleaf	17 Nov., 1452 (resigned 1453)		Early Chancery Rolls No. 671, No. 5
John Sperhawke, S.T.P.	7 May, 1453 (died 1474)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. XX, f. 299d
James Herte	(died 1499)		Episc. Reg. XXIII, f. 356
John Leventhorp	7 March, 1499 (resigned 1527)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. XXIII, f. 356

Anthony Draycott	11 Dec., 1527 (resigned 1531)	Bishop of Lincoln	Episc. Reg. XXVII, f. 236
Humphrey Cotton	30 March, 1531 (resigned 1537)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. XXVII, f. 241
Henry Mallett	1 Sept., 1537 (resigned 1554)	Elstow Abbey	Episc. Reg. XXVII, f. 245
Henry Ashton	23 April, 1554 (deprived 1556)	William Wauton	Episc. Reg. XXVIII, f. 93
John Coole	22 Oct., 1556	The Crown	Episc. Reg. XXVIII, f. 108d
Henry Ashton	(restored 1563)		
Ralph Tunstall, M.A.	20 June, 1563 (resigned 1570)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXVIII, f. 118d
Richard Chambers, M.A.	22 Nov., 1570 (promoted 1593)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXVIII, f. 87
Alured Birtby, B.A.	14 March, 1593 (resigned 1603)		Presentation deed 1593/17
John Huddlestone, S.T.B.	9 March, 1604	Trinity College, Cambridge	Bishop's Certificates
Stephen Peirce, S.T.P.	6 March, 1621 (died 1636)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Bishop's Certificates
William Lindall, S.T.P.	25 June, 1636 (ceded 1643)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Presentation deed, 1636–9
John Wilmer, M.A.	21 Dec. 1643 (vacated 1644)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXI, f. 43
Benjamin King			Urwick, *Nonconformity in Herts*, pp. 636–7
Thomas Kidner, M.A.	12 July, 1648 (vacated *c.* 1663)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Liber Cleri 1662, f. 146
Thomas Johnson	6 Feb., 1663 (ceded 1665)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Archbishop's Certificates

THE VICARS OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF HITCHIN—*Continued*

Name.	Institution.	Patron.	Authority.
William Gibbs	11 July, 1665 (resigned 1690)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXXIII, f. 45d
Francis Bragge, B.A.	7 April, 1690 (died 1728)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXXIV, f. 114d
William Fletcher, S.T.B.	5 Oct., 1728	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXXVIII, p. 194
Mark Hildesley, S.T.D.	24 Feb., 1731 (ceded 1755)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXXVIII, p. 239
John Pilkington Morgan, M.A. ..	18 Aug., 1755 (died 1788)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXXVIII, p. 538
William Hodson, M.A.	28 Oct., 1788 (died 1794)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXXIX, p. 485
John Rippon, M.A.	28 March, 1794 (ceded *c.* 1803)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XXXIX, p. 589
Joshua Ruddock, M.A.	6 Jan., 1804 (died 1821)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XL, p. 76
Henry Wiles, M.A.	23 Oct., 1821 (died 1856)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Episc. Reg. XL, p. 320
Lewis Hensley, M.A.	19 Dec., 1856 (died 1905)	Trinity College, Cambridge	Rochester Diocesan Records
Herbert Edward Jones, M.A. ..	24 Jan., 1906 (resigned 1913)	Trinity College, Cambridge	St. Alban's Diocesan Gazette
George Wilfrid Blenkin, M.A. ..	25 Sept., 1913 (resigned 1914)	Trinity College, Cambridge	St. Alban's Diocesan Gazette
Leonard Beauclerk Ashby, M.A. ..	16 Jan., 1915 (resigned 1928)	Trinity College, Cambridge	St. Alban's Diocesan Gazette
Robert Francis Reginald Routh, M.A.	13 Nov., 1928	Trinity College, Cambridge	St. Alban's Diocesan Gazette

NAMES OF THE MEN OF HITCHIN WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR, 1914–1918

Abbiss, A. J.
Adcock, K. W.
Albon, W.
Albone, A. H.
Allison, A.
Anderson, F.
Appleby, A. H.
Ayto, W. H.

Baker, F.
Baker, W.
Ballard, W. C.
Barber, W. G.
Barker, B.
Barker, C. M.
Barker, G.
Barker, H.
Barker, M.
Barrett, W. C.
Bass, J.
Bath, W.
Bavington, H. L
Beech, F. W.
Beeton, J. W.
Bowler, J.
Bowman, H.
Bowman, H. J.
Brandon, H. E.
Brett, J. H.
Bridges, A. E.
Briston, E. H.
Brittain, A. W. W.
Broughton, W. J.
Brown, A.
Brown, E.
Brown, F. F.
Brown, F. J.
Brown, L.
Brown, W.
Brown, William
Buck, P.
Bullard, H. H.
Burch, A.
Burgess, F. B.
Burrows, W. J. T.
Butler, W. M.
Butts, W.

Cain, F.
Camfield, H. J.
Cannon, E.
Cannon, F.
Carrington, G.
Castle, W.
Catterill, H.
Chalkley, C.
Chalkley, S.
Chalkley, W.
Chalkley, W. F.
Chandler, E. P.
Chapman, E. E.
Chapman, S. E.
Charlton, J.
Clark, J.
Clarke, A. W.
Clarke, E.
Clarke, H. E.
Claydon, W.
Clayton, A.
Coleman, R.
Collins, J. W.
Constable, A.
Cooper, B. T.
Cooper, J. W.
Cooper, W.
Corkett, J.
Cornwell, J. G.
Cotton, E. H.
Couldrey, W. G. H.
Cousins, H.
Cox, C. T.
Crane, F. M.

Darby, H. F.
Darby, W. H.
Darton, F. A.
Day, B. D.
Day, F. W.
Day, L. N.
Davis, P. W.
Dear, J. F.
Denniss, C. J.
Dennis, J. H.
Dimmock, W. M.
Dixon, C.
Dobbs, A.
Doling, A.

Ellis, T. W.
Ellison, E.
Endersby, S.
English, C. W.
Evans, A.
Ewington, W.

Fairclough, J.
Farey, M. H.
Farr, J.
Farrow, A.
Farrow, G. W. A.
Field, G. H.
File, H. W.
Fisher, H.
Fitt, H. S.
Foster, G.
Foster, H.
Foster, W. C.
Fowler, A. C. G.
Franklin, A.
French, A.
French, G. H.
French, H.
French, J.
Froy, B. W.
Froy, F.
Froy, J.

Garratt, L. G.
Gates, G.
Gates, T. H.
Gentle, G.
Gilbert, A. W.
Gilbert, R.
Gilbertson, G. S.
Goodship, D.
Gough, J. R.
Grant, E. A.
Grant, L. P.

Gray, A.
Gray, F.
Gray, J.
Gray, L. E. R.
Green, F.
Green, H. J.
Green, J. H.
Gregory, A. J
Guthrie, C. J.

Haggar, G.
Haggar, H.
Hagger, F.
Hagger, H. C.
Hailey, J.
Hailey, W.
Hallock, H. J.
Halsey, E. C.
Harding, H.
Hare, C.
Harper, W. C.
Harpin, C.
Harvey, E. G.
Harwood, G.
Hawkins, A. P.
Hawkins, F.
Hawkins, H.
Hawkins, P. E.
Hill, J. A.
Hilton, F. W.
Hinstridge, F.
Holt, B.
Houghton, S. G. W.
Howard, S. J.
Hoye, A. P.
Hubbard, H.
Huckle, H. W.
Hulatt, P. C. E
Hull, J.
Hunt, B.
Hunt, C. H.
Hunt, F.

I'Anson, W.
Izzard, C.

Jackson, F. A.
Jackson, G. H.
James, G.
James, T. W.
Jenkins, A. R.
Jenkins, W.
Jennings, J. R.
Johnson, W.
Jones, E. T.

King, E. P.
King, W.
Kingsley, J.
Kingsley, W.
Knight, G.

Langford, A. P.
Lawrence, W.
Lawson, W. C.
Lazenby, H.
Leete, F. E.
Leete, S. H.
Lewis, G. Y.
Lewis, H. J.
Lines, A. E.
Lisles, J.
Lovatt, W. A.
Ludford, A.

Manning, J.
Marchant, H. W.
Marsom, H. J.
Martin, H.
Massey, A.
Mather, J. W.
Matthews, W.
Maylin, F.
Minnis, A. W.
Monk, A.
Morgan, E. A.
Moulden, H. H.
Moulden, P.
Munby, E. J.
Muncey, A.
Munt, H. G.
Munt, T. R. H.

Negus, A. E.

Odell, E.
Odell, R. M.
Odell, W. J.
O'Keefe, H. W.
Orsman, A. B.
Packham, R.
Pallett, E. W.
Parcell, J. F.
Pateman, L. M.
Payne, T. R.
Pearce, W. C.
Pearmain, F.
Pearmain, W.
Pedley, C. H.
Pepper, W.
Phillipson, M.
Pierson, E. A.
Pike, H. L.
Pilsworth, A. J.
Powell, F.
Powell, J. T.
Primett, C.
Primett, F.
Primett, F. J.
Primett, H. S.
Pyman, C. K. L.
Pyman, R. L.

Ramsbotham, J.
Ransom, H. W.
Ransom, J.
Reed, F. J.
Reed, G. F.
Reynolds, C. G.
Reynolds, G. L.
Richmond, F. J.
Robinson, R. C.
Robson, E. G. U.
Rogers, G.
Rudd, W.
Rutland, B. A.
Rutland, H. G.
Ryall, G.

Sanders, A.
Sapsed, A.
Saunders, B.
Saunders, F. J.
Saunders, V. W.
Sawyer, B.
Scott, J.
Sell, R.
Sell, W. J.
Sells, C.

Sewell, J.
Sharp, F. A.
Sharp, G.
Sharp, H.
Sharp, S.
Shepherd, H.
Simmons, A.
Simmons, S.
Smith, E. W.
Smith, F.
Smith, F. W.
Smith, J. O.
Smith, S.
Smith, Sidney
Smith, T.
Smith, Walter
Smith, William
Spencer, G. A.
Spicer, C.
Spriggs, A. F.
Spurr, A. G.
Spurr, D. B.
Spurr, W. G.
Staughton, E.
Steeley, A.
Stevens, C.
Stevens, F.
Stevens, H.
Stimpson, F.
Stokes, W. G.
Summerfield, A.
Summerfield, H.

Tansley, A. G.
Tansley, G. W.
Tansley, H.
Tarrier, F. R.
Taylor, E.
Taylor, J.
Taylor, N.
Tew, W. H.
Thomas, L. H.
Thompson, F. J.
Thornton, F. V.
Thorogood, T. G.
Thrussell, A. S.
Titmus, A.
Titmuss, F.
Titmuss, J.
Titmuss, L.
Tomlin, A. C.
Tomlin, B.
Tomlin, C.
Tomlin, G.
Tomlin, H.
Tomlin, O. L.
Toms, H.
Topham, F.
Trigg, G.

Upchurch, P. J.

Walch, J. B. M.
Walker, C.
Waller, B.
Waller, G.
Warren, A.
Watson, B.
Weare, C.
Webb, F. J.
Welch, J.
West, A.
Whaley, F. J.
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Whitby, A. H.
White, H. C.
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White, L. J.
Whittred, F. E.
Williams, G.
Wilshere, S. A.
Wilson, W. C.
Worbey, A.
Worbey, A. W.
Worsley, A.
Wray, E.
Wright, C.
Wright, E. L.

Young, F. E., V.C.

TO THE MEMORY OF THE MEN OF HITCHIN WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR

Shall we not praise your hearts' triumphant bearing,
The stern resolve, the high and stainless faith;
For one far hope through hopeless years still daring
The bitterness of death?

Out on the winds of time like banners soaring,
Your names unfurl the splendour of England's truth:
Sons of the free in sacrifice outpouring
The strong, red wine of Youth.

Sunward you mount, whilst we whose souls are stricken
Haunt the lone paths of grieving and regret,
Where your strayed feet and lingering voices quicken
The pain we would forget.

Joyful and morning-eyed, blithe and clean-hearted,
Singing you pass in every pause of life;
Bravely companioned, from all sorrows parted,
Stilled from the throes of strife.

Now from this vale of tears we send you greeting;
The night wears on; earth's transient dream shall cease—
Then come the celestial dawn, the marvellous meeting,
The City of God's Peace.

REGINALD L. HINE.

HITCHIN WAR MEMORIAL

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA: VOLUME I

Page	*Line*	
14	18	Delete ' 1900.'
24	11	For ' August 13 ' read ' August 1.'
28	30	Insert quotation mark after ' inward.
30	33	For ' ame ' read ' same.'
38	26	For ' worth 2d.' read ' worth 2s.'
44	21	Enclose 79. 4. 198 in brackets.
50	17	For ' daughter ' read ' grand-daughter.'
62	23	For ' *vocat un* ' read ' *vocatum.*'
70	24	For ' churches ' read ' parishes.'
79	29	For ' 61 feet 6 inches ' read ' 67 feet ' and for ' 6 inches less ' read ' 8 feet less.'
89	18	For ' centered ' read ' centred.' Also on p. 108, l. 18.
93	15	Reverse the second bracket.
100	21	Instead of ' 217. 6 ' read ' Fuller, *Abel Redivivus*, ii, 319.'
107	17	The nave roof was restored at the sole expense of Francis Lucas.
107	23	The window to those who fell in the Great War was given to the Church by Thomas Fenwick Harrison.
110	30	For ' Isaac James ' read ' Wm. Dunnage,' and add this reference to line 34 (28. 151).
121	23	Reverse the second ' e ' in ' mediəval.'
127	20–1	Delete Dunnage's unauthenticated reference to Wallingford, and the footnote.
144		Footnote xix. The legend should read: *S' Cōitatis Frm' Carmelicar de Hyche.* The second ' c ' in ' *Carmelicar* ' is wrongly cut on the matrix. It should of course be ' t.'
148	1	Advance the first quotation mark on to the word ' old.'
148	3 & 4	Delete the word ' of ' from l. 3 and insert it at the beginning of l. 4.
154	1	Footnote vii. Add ' s ' to ' horse.'
161		Footnote xiv. For ' reused ' read ' re-used.'
171	22	For ' way ' read ' work.'
182	1	For ' ordinance ' read ' ordnance.'
198	32	There is no proof of Bunyan having been ' pressed.' It is more commonly supposed that he enlisted out of pique at his father re-marrying within a few months of his first wife's death.
207		Plate facing. For ' after Van Dyck ' read ' by Van Dyck.' In the account of Hitchin Priory, in *Country Life* for October 17 and 24, 1925, which I took as my authority, Mr. H. Avray Tipping had referred to this picture as being *after* Van Dyck. In a subsequent issue, which by mischance I did not see, he corrected his mistake and made it clear that the painting was a genuine work by the master's own hand.

Page	*Line*	
207	26	For ' Sir John Docwra ' in footnote xx read ' St. John Docwra.'
208	28	For ' rigded ' read ' ridged.'
216	11	For ' Whitcomb ' read ' Widdecombe.'
224	24	For ' glimpse ' read ' scan.'
227	9	Professor J. H. Clapham suggests that I should substitute ' revived ' for ' devised.' The use of passes can be traced back to the reign of Richard II.
231	6–11	It should have been noted that these lines are adapted from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*
236	11	For ' paraphrases ' read ' paraphrase.'
245	20–1	For ' grandson of the last Prior ' read ' great-grand-nephew of the Prior, 1501–1527.'
280		The footnote (iii) should read ' *Vide* Harrison's *Description of Britaine,* in the 1587 issue of *Holinshed,* cap. 19.'
319	20	For ' Brigg ' read ' Briggs.'
333	15	Delete ' the Rev.' from ' the Rev. H. R. Wilton Hall.'
341	10	For ' Samual ' read ' Samuel.'
356	18	For ' Foster, Miss J. F.' read ' Foster, John F.'
358	8	For ' Gertrude ' read ' Grace.'
361	20	For ' Cockens ' read ' Crescent.'
364	9	For ' J. Prior Moir ' read ' J. Reid Moir.'
372	16	For ' A. H. Palmer ' read ' G. H. Palmer.'

HITCHIN WORTHIES

The author has in preparation a companion volume of *Hitchin Worthies*, which will contain lives of the following townsmen. There will in addition be a number of ' biographies in brief.'

AGNES BEAUMONT, the persecuted disciple of John Bunyan
GEORGE BEAVER, town surveyor and diarist
SIR HENRY BESSEMER, inventor of new process for making steel
ANN BRADLEY, founder of the Baptist Sunday School
FRANCIS BRAGGE, poet, barrister and vicar of Hitchin
WILLIAM BROMEFIELD, Quaker, courtier and adventurer
GEORGE CHAPMAN, Elizabethan poet and playwright
DANIEL COULSON, tailor and diarist
JOHN CURLING, traveller, magistrate and author
WILLIAM DAWSON, botanist, schoolmaster and librarian
WILLIAM DRAGE, apothecary and astrological writer
SAMUEL DRAPER, gipsy, fiddler and buffoon
JOHN EVERETT, churchman and highwayman
W. J. FITCH, head master of the British School
OSWALD FOSTER, doctor and philanthropist
ALBERT EBENEZER FOX, poacher, sportsman and gentleman-at-large
PHOEBE GLAISYER, Quaker and diarist
JOHN HAWKINS, ' the uncrowned King of Hitchin '
MARK HILDESLEY, vicar, diarist and bishop
ROBERT HINDE, original of Sterne's ' Uncle Toby '
SAMUEL JAMES, Baptist minister and diarist
FRANCIS LUCAS, banker, wit and poet
JAMES LUCAS, the ' Hermit of Redcoats '
SAMUEL LUCAS, brewer and watercolour artist
WILLIAM LUCAS, diarist and country gentleman
DR. MANSELL, quack doctor and lunatic-at-large
JOSEPH NIBLOCK, master of the Free School and divine
RALPH RADCLIFFE, playwright, schoolmaster and squire
F. P. DELMÉ-RADCLIFFE, Master of Hounds and author of *The Noble Science*
WILLIAM RANSOM, Quaker, botanist and antiquary
FREDERIC SEEBOHM, author of *The English Village Community*, etc.
THOMAS SHILLITOE, Quaker minister and diarist
SARAH SMITHSON, traveller, diarist and philanthropist
LAWSON THOMPSON, connoisseur, collector and wit
DANIEL TIMES, attorney and diarist
WILLIAM WILSHERE, Lord of Hitchin Manor

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(566) 1904. Divine Training in the life and experience of the late Mrs. W. F. Morriss of Hitchin.

(567) 1906. The History of Royston. Alfred Kingston. See Chapter viii.

(568) 1907. Becken Grove Baptist Church, Watford. Rev. James Stuart. References to Henry Denne and Paul Hobson, p. 6, and to Samuel James, p. 30.

(569) 1908–1927. Extracts relating to the Tilehouse Street Church and its Ministers, taken by Reginald L. Hine from the Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society.

(570) 1909. John Bunyan and his local associations. A paper read to the Society of Arts and Letters at Hitchin by the Rev. C. F. Bryer (Original MS. in the possession of his family).

(571) 1911. Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence. Professor G. Lyon Turner. 3 vols. Hitchin references Vol. ii, p. 880; Vol. iii, pp. 295, 474, 748.

(572) 1912. The Early English Dissenters in the light of recent research. Champlin Burrage. Reference to Paul Hobson, Vol. ii, 304–305.

(573) 1912. A Hertfordshire Worthy: Jonas Thurrowgood of Hitchin. W. B. Gerish.

(574) 1919. The History of Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Hitchin. The Rev. James McCleery.

(575) 1919. Account of the Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Tilehouse Street Church (Hertfordshire Express, June 28, 1919).

(576) 1920. Traditions of the Tilehouse Street Chapel and of the Foster Family, taken down by Reginald L. Hine from the dictation of Matthew Henry Foster, deacon since 1866.

(577) 1923. A History of British Baptists. W. T. Whitley. See pp. 68, 80, 104, 136, 151, for Henry Denne; 70 and 71 for Edward Cresset.

(578) 1927. John Bunyan. Gwilym O. Griffith. No index, but see pp. 132, 210–214, 272.

(579) 1928. John Bunyan's England. C. Bernard Cockett. See pp. 18, 21, 23 for views and description of Wainwood Dell, Wainwood Cottage, Bunyan's Chair in Tilehouse Street Church and the tablet to Agnes Beaumont.

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS

(580) 1641. The justification of the Independent Churches of Christ, briefly declaring that the Congregations of the Saints ought not to have Dependency in Government upon any other, or Direction in Worship from any other, than their Head and Lawgiver. Katherine Chidley (Thomason Tracts, E. 174, 7).

(581) 1673–1846. Minutes of the Church Book at Hertford. Contains many references to the Hitchin Congregationalists worshipping under William Haworth and his successor, John Guyse.

(582) 1689–1690. Certificates under the Toleration Act, 1689, of meetings of Protestant Dissenters 'in Edward Hurst's house at Hitchin,' 'in the barne of Ralph Bigg,' and 'at a house built for that purpose in a certain piece of ground late bought of Alice Bonfield' (Entered at the end of the Register Book, No. 8, 1665–1667, of wills proved in the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, now kept at Somerset House).

(583) 1690–1805. A packet of loose papers kept in the Chapel safe, including early surrenders and admissions of the copyhold property on which the building stands, a copy of the registration under the Toleration Act, 1689, and sundry accounts for the repair of the chapel and vestry.

(584) 1691–1726. A Church Book kept for my own private use to register many incidental things and especially my Preaching, Baptizing and Administering the Lord's Supper, with a register of the names of my pastoral flock. Joseph Hussey, sometime pastor of Madencroft Meeting and Back Street Meeting, Hitchin, and subsequently of the Bridge Street Presbyterian

Meeting at Cambridge (MS. in the possession of Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge).

(585) 1692. The Gospel-Feast opened, or the Great Supper of the Parable discovered in several Sermons. Joseph Hussey.

(586) 1694. Letter of Edward Hitchin concerning the miraculous cure of David Wright in the Back Street Meeting Place.

(587) 1697. Turner's Remarkable Providences, Chap. cxxxii, p. 112. An account of David Wright's miraculous cure.

(588) 1704. A Warning from the Winds, a sermon preached by Joseph Hussey on January 19, 1703/4, being the day of Publicke Humiliation for the late terrible and awakening storm of Wind sent in great Rebuke upon this Kingdom; and now set forth to have been inflicted as a punishment of the General Contempt cast in England upon the work of the Holy Ghost: to which is subnected a laborious Exercitation upon *Ephesians* ii. 2, to defend this text against the Common mistake that the winds are raised by Satan under the Divine Permission.

(589) 1706. The Infant's Cause Pleaded, Cleared and Vindicated; or the Concurrent Harmony of all Parts of Holy Scripture, for the Covenant, Interest, Church Membership and Baptism of the Infants of Believers. Edward Hitchin. Isaac Watts joins with three others in an Address to the Reader.

(590) 1707. God's operations of Grace, but no Offers of His Grace. Joseph Hussey.

(591) 1708. A letter from the Cobler of Gloster to the Curier of Hitchin: being remarks on a book entitled The Infant's cause Pleaded.

(592) 1715–1822. Church Book of the Independent Meeting House at Back Street now known as the Queen Street Congregational Church. The first volume. A copy of all material entries has been made by Charles Loftus Barham. The original is kept in the Chapel safe.

(593) 1717. The Prevalency of Prayer. T(homas) A(ldridge). Contains an account of the miraculous cure of

David Wright at the Hitchin Independent Meeting-house.

(594) 1739. Account of the preaching of George Whitefield at Hitchin (His journal, under this year, Friday, May 25).

(595) 1739. A Profession of Faith, argued from the Priesthood of Christ. Joseph Pitts.

(596) 1740. The Right Way of Preaching Christ, opened and enforced. The Rev. Joseph Pitts (The Evangelical Preacher, 1802, Vol. i, pp. 51–72).

(597) 1742. Faith the best Preservative against Fainting. A Sermon by the Rev. Joseph Pitts (The Evangelical Preacher, 1802, Vol. ii, pp. 132–152).

(598) 1749. Submission with Praise to God on the Death of Hopeful Children, a Sermon preached by Joseph Pitts on occasion of the Death of his only Son, who departed this life in the 16th year of his age, with some account of his character, his Behaviour in his sickness and his last Words.

(599) 1772. Free Thoughts on the late application of some Dissenting Ministers to Parliament. Edward Hitchin (Copy in the Bodleian. 8° B.S.X., 217).

(600) 1772–1837. Original registers of birth and baptism, 1772–1837, and burial, 1786–1836, of members of the Hitchin Back Street Meeting deposited at Somerset House. For earlier periods see the Church Book, Vol. i.

(601) 1774. Account of the death of the Rev. Edward Hitchin (Gentleman's Magazine, p. 46).

(602) 1785. Sermons adapted to the Family and closet by the late Rev. James Webb, Minister of the Independent Meeting in Dead Street, Hitchin.

(603) 1791. A defence of the Character of Joseph Hussey against the aspersions of Mr. O'Leary (There is a copy in the Bodleian. None in the B.M.).

(604) 1794. Youthful Piety Exemplified in the Character and Dying Converse of Mr. Ebenezer Griffiths, the only son of the Rev. John Griffiths, Pastor of the Independent Congregation at Hitchin in Hertfordshire, to which is prefixed a Serious Address to the young People of that Congregation by the Afflicted Father of the Deceased.

(605) 1795. Account of the Rev. William Williams's ordination (The Evangelical Magazine, p. 511).

(606) 1803. The Nonconformist's Memorial. Edmund Calamy. Corrected and Methodized by Samuel Palmer. See Vol. i, 259, for Francis Holcroft; Vol. ii, 300, for William Haworth, and 305 for Daniel Skingle; Vol. iii, 148, for Thomas Wright.

(607) 1807. Accounts of the miraculous cure of David Wright. Samuel Palmer (Theological and Biblical Magazine, p. 338; Evangelical Magazine, p. 444).

(608) 1808–1814. The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses in London, etc. Walter Wilson. See Accounts of John Guyse, ii, 232–241, Edward Hitchin, iii, 458; Edward Hickman, iii, 458–460; James Webb, iii, 460–462; Joseph Pitts, iv, 269–272; Joseph Hussey, iv, 411–422.

(609) 1810. The Life of the Rev. William Gordon, D.D. James Conder (MS. in Dr. Williams's Library, Gordon Square, London).

(610) 1813. Account of the settlement of the Rev. Charles Sloper in the Back Street Meeting (The Evangelical Magazine, p. 353).

(611) 1817. Obituary notice of the Rev. William Williams (The Evangelical Magazine, p. 266).

(612) 1819. Admonitions from the dead considered and unproved in a Sermon preached at Hitchin the 21st of January, 1819, at the interment of the Rev. William Parry, principal tutor in the Academy for educating young men for the work of the Ministry at Wymondley, Herts, by William Chaplin of Bishop Stortford. Copy in Hertford Museum.

(613) 1819. A Selection of Hymns from the best authors, including a number of originals. William Williams, Minister of the Gospel.

(614) 1820–1880. A collection of portraits of the ministers of this period, with drawings and photographs of the old chapel. In the possession of Herbert H. Minnis.

(615) 1821. The Riches of Free Grace. Thomas Oxenham. This gives an account of the Chapel services at Trunk's House Independent Meeting, Hitchin.

(616) 1822–1824. Manuscript Diary of William Wayne, Pastor of Back Street Meeting, in the possession of Herbert H. Minnis.

(617) 1825. Obituary notice of the Rev. Charles Sloper (The Evangelical Magazine, p. 103).

(618) 1825–1868. The Church Book. Second volume. The Minutes from 1856–1868 have been repeated in the third volume.

(619) 1830. History of the ancient Town and Borough of Hertford. Lewis Turnor. References to Wm. Haworth and John Guyse, pp. 382, 400–2.

(620) 1834. Account of the Wymondley Academy in the Congregational Magazine.

(621) 1852. The Atoning Lamb, a Scriptural Exhibition and Enforcement of our Lord's vicarious death. By the Rev. W. Griffiths of Back Street Meeting, Hitchin.

(622) 1853. An address to the Independent Dissenters worshipping in Back Street Meeting and to the friends in the town and neighbourhood. W. Griffith and W. Impey.

(623) 1855. Notes of the ministry of the Rev. William Williams amongst the Independents at Hitchin (Nonconformist Churches of Hail Weston. Dr. Joseph Rix. Vol. iii, p. 214. MS. at Dr. Williams's Library).

(624) 1855. Catalogue of the books belonging to the Back Street Meeting. MS. in the Church safe.

(625) 1856. Obituary Notice of the Rev. William Wayne (The Congregational Year Book, p. 239).

(626) 1856. An Historical Account of the Queen Street Congregational Church, Hitchin; preached as a farewell sermon upon leaving the old Chapel. Rev. W. Griffith. This has been copied out in Vol. iii of the Church Book, pp. 7–39.

(627) 1856. The Funeral Sermon preached in memory of the late Mrs. Griffith of Hitchin, by the Rev. Thomas Hill.

(628) 1857–1904. The Church Book: third volume. Contains, *inter alia*, a register of members, with dates of admission, birth, baptism, marriage and burial.

(629) 1861. Testimonial and address to the Rev. W. Griffith. Original in the possession of Herbert H. Minnis.

(630) 1871–1881. Minutes of the Deacons' Meeting. MS. in the Church safe.

(631) 1879. Account of the Rev. R. Nobb's Recognition Services at Queen Street Independent Church (The Hertfordshire Quarterly, No. 2, pp. 58–60).

(632) 1884. Nonconformity in Herts. William Urwick. For William Haworth, see pp. 174, 216, 537; for Daniel Skingle, p. 542; for Francis Holcroft, pp. 543–545.

(633) 1890. Life of Dr. William Gordon by the Rev. Alexander Gordon (D.N.B., xxii, 235).

(634) 1898–1927. Hitchin Congregational Magazine. Combined since 1925 with the Hitchin Baptist Magazine. Complete series in the possession of Herbert H. Minnis.

(635) 1900. Obituary notice of the Rev. William Griffith (The Congregational Year Book, p. 185).

(636) 1905. A Remarkable Letter of Joseph Hussey (Trans. of the Cong. Hist. Soc., Vol. ii, pp. 136–8).

(637) 1906. An Account of Katharine Chidley (Trans. Cong. Hist. Soc., Vol. ii, pp. 332–334).

(638) 1927. Letters from Halley Stewart to the author upon certain doubtful points in the history of the Hitchin Independents.

(639) 1928. The History of Welwyn Independent Chapel. Raymond H. Belton. For references to Hitchin, Thomas Oxenham and Benjamin Gatward, see pp. 16–34.

THE QUAKERS (i)

(640) 1639. Certificate of Commissaries Court that Joseph Wiggs and John Clarke would not take off their hats at Hitchin on May 9th (Cal. S.P.D., Vol. 420, No. 123).

(641) 1664. A Second Relation from Hertford containing the unjust proceedings of some called Justices there at the General Quarter Sessions upon the Tryall of one and twenty innocent persons called Quakers for a pretended breach of the late Act. By W. S. See

i. For the sake of brevity the Library of the Society of Friends is here referred to as L.S.F., the *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, as J.F.H.S., the *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, as F.Q.E., and the Calendar of State Papers (Domestic) as Cal. S.P.D.

also the first issue A True short impartial Relation, etc., 1664, and the article by Samuel Graveson in F.Q.E., 1916, pp. 358–370, on The Hertford Quaker Trials of 1664.

(642) 1664. Information against Francis Field of Hitchin, Shopkeeper, as a disperser of Quaker books (Cal. S.P.D., cix, 44; Cal. 1664–5, p. 142).

(643) 1668–1720. Extracts relating to the early History of Friends at Hitchin, taken by Reginald L. Hine from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings Books at Hertford, 10 vols. Numbered and filed.

(644) 1676. The Testimony of the Hartford Quakers for the Man Christ Jesus, vindicated from the malicious slanders, perversions, confusions, impertinences, and idle Quibling of William Haworth, an Independent Preacher. Richard Thomas and Mary Stout.

(645) 1678. An apology for the true Christian Divinity, etc. Robert Barclay.

(646) 1678. The dissension at Hitchin and Hertford over the setting up of Women's Meetings. (See Two letters from Isaac Penington to Hertford Friends, 22nd March, 1677–8, and 27th April, 1678, in L.S.F., John Penington's MSS. Collection, iv, Nos. 148, 150; also The Christian Quaker, Pt. v, pp. 83 *et seq.*; and L.S.F., A.R.B. Collection, Nos. 199*a*–208.)

(647) 1681–1929. Manuscripts collected by Reginald L. Hine for a history of Hitchin Friends. Numbered and filed.

(648) 1690. The Quaker Converted, or The Experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ crucified in opposition to the principles of the Quakers, declared in a narrative of the conversion of one in Hartfordshire who was for some years of their faith and principle, with some things annexed for detection of their errors and delusions and prevention of the growth thereof. Likewise an epistle dedicatory by W. Haworth, Minister of the Gospel.

(649) 1696. Account of Thomas Janney's visit to Hitchin and his illness at William Turner's house there (Piety Promoted, W. & T. Evans, Vol. i, p. 180).

(650) 1703–1929. Minute Books of the Quarterly Meeting, first known as Hertfordshire Quarterly Meeting, then as Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Q.M., and latterly as Beds Q.M. Many references to Hitchin (Hitchin Meeting MSS., 9 vols., now lodged in the L.S.F., with the exception of the last two volumes).

(651) 1704. A Salutation of Love to Friends and their Children. Thomas Thompson.

(652) 1705–1717. Thomas Thompson's Accounts of his ministry in America (Yearly Meeting Minutes, Vol. iii, p. 195; Vol. v, p. 255).

(653) 1715. The Glorious Truth of Universal Grace and Atonement exalted, etc. Thomas Thompson. A reprint of 1727 contains an account of this minister's last illness and death.

(654) 1715. A Farewell Epistle by way of Exhortation to Friends. By T. T(hompson). On his departure for America. Written at Hitchin the 22nd of the 2nd month, 1715.

(655) 1726. A collection of the Works of William Penn.

(656) 1726–1778. Minute Books of Baldock and Royston Monthly Meeting, 2 vols. MSS. at L.S.F.

(657) 1729–1748. A register of the burials of members of Hitchin Meeting. Deposited with the Registrar-General at Somerset House, and see 683.

(658) 1734–1929. Hitchin Preparative Meeting Books, 8 vols. (Hitchin Meeting MSS.).

(659) 1737. Letter of Isaac Sharples to Susannah Crowdson (L.S.F. Portf. 14, p. 91).

(660) 1738–1783. Rebecca Butterfield's diary of Friends visiting Jordans (MS. at L.S.F.). Many references to Hitchin Friends. See Index made by the late Joseph J. Green.

(661) 1743–1826. The Commonplace Book of Sarah Crafton, *née* Bell (MSS. of Joseph J. Green of Hastings, now at L.S.F.). Refers to Mercy Ransom, Mercy Exton and other Hitchin Friends.

(662) 1744. The Way to the Sabbath of Rest. Thomas Bromley. The L.S.F. copy has this note in the writing of Samuel Spavold on the fly-leaf: ' I give this book to

my beloved wife Phoebe Spavold. Witness my hand, Samuel Spavold, 8th mo. 15th, 1759.'

(663) 1745 *et seq.* Mercy Bell's Commonplace Book (Joseph J. Green MSS., L.S.F.).

(664) 1745–1788. A bundle of Meeting House Accounts and memoranda of goods taken by distraint for tythes and substitutes for Militia Service (Hitchin Meeting MSS.).

(665) 1745. The Journal of James Dickenson. Ref. to Hitchin and Hertford Meetings, p. 73.

(666) 1747. The Journal of Thomas Story. Hitchin references, pp. 464, 578, 637, 685, 687, 691, 731, 751. There is at L.S.F. a MS. Index made by the late Joseph J. Green.

(667) 1749. Testimony given forth at Salterforth by Samuel Spavold (Impey MSS., Box 1, p. 63, L.S.F.).

(668) 1751. Journal of the life of Thomas Chalkley, 2nd edition. See pp. 63, 64, 280.

(669) 1753. Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers for the Testimony of a good Conscience. Joseph Besse. Hitchin refs., Vol. i, pp. 240–254.

(670) 1754. Vision of Samuel Spavold (Portf. xix, p. 82, L.S.F.).

(671) 1754. A summary account of an Extraordinary visit to this Metropolis in the year 1753 by the Ministry of Ann Mercy Bell. J.P.

(672) 1756. An account of the Life, Travels and Christian Experiences of Samuel Bownas, pp. 51 and 196.

(673) 1757–1785. The diary of Richard Lindley of Darlington (Robson MSS., 50, 50*a*, 50*b*, L.S.F.). References to Samuel Spavold in the years 1759 (3), 1760, 1777 (2), 1780 (2); sixteen references to Isaac Sharples and three to Isaac Gray.

(674) 1757–1793. Account of Sufferings: Baldock, Royston, Ashwell and Hitchin (Hitchin Meeting MSS.).

(675) 1758–1879. Minute Books of the Select Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders at Hitchin and Hertford (Hitchin MSS., L.S.F.).

(676) 1758. Letter of Isaac Gray of Hitchin, Minister, ' to the Fresh Visited of the Lord in Essex ' (Reynolds MSS. 333, Box 1, L.S.F.).

(677) 1760. A Collection of Testimonies concerning Quakers. Mary Ransom, p. 206.

(678) 1761–1821. The Records and Recollections of James Jenkins (MS. at L.S.F. See Index under Isaac Sharples, Thomas Shillitoe, Sarah Crawley and Samuel Spavold).

(679) 1761–1929. Monthly Meeting Books of Hitchin Meeting held with those of Royston, Ashwell and Baldock, 8 vols. (Hitchin Meeting MSS.).

(680) 1764. Two letters from Samuel Spavold of Hitchin to Samuel Day (Joseph J. Green MSS., Portf. 8, p. 113, L.S.F.).

(681) 1771. Epistles to Yearly Meeting and to Friends in Amsterdam, by Isaac Sharples of Hitchin, William Fry, John Kendall, James Backhouse and John Elliot. Refers at large to their travels in the ministry through Holland (Richard Lindley of Darlington MSS., No. 50, L.S.F.).

(682) 1775. Letter from Isaac Sharples to Richard Chester, concerning the decease of Rachel Wilson (Portf. 34, No. 52, L.S.F.).

(683) 1776–1837. Original registers of birth, marriage and burial of Hitchin Monthly Meeting and Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Quarterly Meeting deposited at Somerset House. (See the Index at L.S.F.)

(684) 1777. Epistle to Bedfordshire Quarterly Meeting, by Isaac Sharples, Edmund Gurney, John Kendall, Richard Chester and Abraham Gray (MS. in the possession of Francis Ransom).

(685) 1777. Leaves from the Past: the diary of John Allen, edited by Clement Young Sturge (1905), see pp. 21, 37, 40.

(686) 1777–1830. Business, Household and Private Account Books of William Lucas. 3 vols. (MSS. in the possession of Stephen Lucas).

(687) 1778–1781. Letters from Isaac Sharples to his sister Ann Young of Bristol (John Thompson MSS., L.S.F., Nos. 478, 479, 481, 483).

(688) 1779. Epistle to Friends in Ireland. Samuel Spavold and James Jenkins.

(689) 1780. Address to the Magistrates of Hitchin on considering the unprecedented proceedings in this town by way of rejoicing on the news of the taking of Charles-

town in South Carolina. A well-wisher (Broadsheet in the Thompson Collection at Hitchin, Vol. i, p. 43).

(690) 1780. Letter of Isaac Sharples to Adey Bellamy (L.S.F., Gibson MSS., Vol. ii, p. 97).

(691) 1783–1799. Letters from Sarah Crawley to Samuel Spavold, to Friends of Hitchin Monthly Meeting and to Friends of Beds and Herts Quarterly Meeting (L.S.F., John Thompson MSS., 74–77).

(692) 1785–1879. Minute Books of Hitchin Women Friends' Meeting (Hitchin MSS., L.S.F.).

(693) 1785. A short narrative of our dear and worthy friend Isaac Sharples, late of Hitchin, to which is added some of his solid and weighty expressions a little before his end.

(694) 1788–1832. Minute Books of Hitchin Select Meeting (Hitchin Meeting MSS.).

(695) 1793–1864. Particulars of Distraints for Tithes and Church Rates (Hitchin Meeting MSS.).

(696) 1795. Henry Wormall's diary. Refs. to Joshua and Elizabeth Wheeler of Hitchin, pp. 25, 26, 69 (MS. at L.S.F., Box K).

(697) 1796. An Epistle to the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders to be held at Hitchin. William Lucas, Elizabeth Wheeler, Joshua Wheeler and John Miller (Herts and Beds Q.M. Records at L.S.F., No. 12).

(698) 1797–1803. The Diary of Susanna Day. Contains references to Mercy Ransom and other Hitchin Friends (Joseph J. Green MSS., L.S.F.).

(699) 1797. A caution and warning to the Inhabitants of Great Britain, but more especially to her Rulers, and all in Power. Thomas Shillitoe.

(700) 1798. John Grubb's Diary. References to Sarah Crawley, Mercy Ransom, Rudd Wheeler, Isaac Sharples (The British Friend, 1904, pp. 140, 151, 222).

(701) 1799. A Journal of the Life, Travels and Gospel labours of Daniel Stanton. Ref. to Samuel Spavold, p. 83.

(702) 1799–1842. Hitchin Monthly Meeting of Women Friends, 2 vols. (Hitchin Meeting House MSS.).

(703) 1802. Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, 2nd edition.

(704) 1806. A letter on Tithes, copied from a manuscript found among the papers of the late Isaac Sharples (John Thompson MSS., No. 548, L.S.F.).

(705) 1807. Account of the death of Isaac Gray of Hitchin while travelling in the ministry in Ireland (Memoirs of Sarah Stephenson, p. 75).

(706) 1808. Elizabeth Rowntree's Memorandum Book. Refs. to Mercy Ransom, Elizabeth Wheeler, Oswald Foster, p. 6 (MS. at L.S.F., Box T).

(707) 1809. The choosing of Phoebe Allen as clerk and Ann Lucas as her assistant to the Yearly Meeting of Women Friends (MS. at L.S.F., Portf. 17, 71).

(708) 1811. A diary of some religious exercises and experiences of Samuel Scott, late of Hartford. No index, but for Hitchin and its ministers see pp. 4, 30, 33, 52, 73, 102, 105, 140, 143, 150, 160, 173, 199, 211, 213, 219.

(709) 1812–1825. Letters written to William Lucas of Hitchin (John Thompson MSS., Nos. 238, 290, 401, 402).

(710) 1812–1838. List of members of Hitchin Monthly Meeting (MS. in L.S.F.).

(711) 1812–1870. Letters (1) from William and Ann Lucas to their children; (2) from Samuel Lucas to his first wife Matilda Holmes; (3) from Samuel Lucas to his children Samuel, Ann, Matilda, Ralph and Edwin; (4) from Samuel Lucas to Elizabeth Manser, his second wife (MSS. in the possession of Stephen Lucas).

(712) 1813–1929. Annual Monitor. And see the annotated list of sixty-eight Hitchin Friends, extracted by the late Joseph J. Green from the Index published by him in 1894 (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(713) 1816. Letter from Thomas Shillitoe to Thomas Thompson, giving an account of his daughter Mary's death (MS. at L.S.F., Portf. 6, 153).

(714) 1816. Some remarks by way of diary written by Mercy Ransom during a long confinement by lameness. Edited by her niece Susannah Day. The diary covers the period from 1802–1810.

(715) 1818. History of the Yearly Meeting of 1818. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 24, 31–34 (MS. at L.S.F., Box D).

(716) 1819. Some expressions of Joseph Ransom, who died 8th of 11th month, 1819, aged 35 years (L.S.F., Robson MSS., No. 79).

(717) 1820. An Address to Friends in Great Britain and Ireland. Thomas Shillitoe.

(718) 1820–1863. Minutes and miscellaneous papers of Hitchin Peace Society (MSS. in the Friends Meeting House at Hitchin).

(719) 1821. Thomas Shillitoe in Holland. Letters of introduction (MSS. at L.S.F., Portf. 35, ff. 3, 153, 154).

(720) 1821. Letters from John Bevan to Samuel Allen of Hitchin, relating to the Peace Society (MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(721) 1823. Letter from John Thompson to Edward Thompson relating to Thomas Shillitoe (MS. in the possession of Mary Thompson).

(722) 1824. Lines on Friend Thomas Shillitoe's long persevering abstinence. John Morgan (MS. in the Thompson Collection at Hitchin, Vol. i, p. 47).

(723) 1824. Letter from John Barclay to William Lucas of Hitchin, asking for local information with a view to a further volume of Piety Promoted (L.S.F., John Thompson MSS., 23).

(724) 1826. Thomas Shillitoe in America (MS. at L.S.F., Portf. 29, 58).

(725) 1826. Testimony concerning Elizabeth Townsend (L.S.F., Robson MSS., Testimonies ii, p. 210).

(726) 1828. Letters from William Procter concerning the Hicksite separation. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe *passim* (MSS. at L.S.F., Box O).

(727) 1829. Memoirs of Ruth Follows. Samuel Stansfield. Refs. to Samuel Spavold, pp. 28, 44.

(728) 1830. A Catalogue of Books belonging to Hitchin Monthly Meeting. Supplements were issued in 1886 and 1907.

(729) 1830–1860. Letters written by several correspondents to John Thompson, of Hitchin (L.S.F., John Thompson MSS., Nos. 67, 98, 99, 100, 235, 241, 242, 270, 271, 359, 542). See also 953*a*.

(730) 1831. Letter of Thomas Shillitoe to Thomas Thompson (L.S.F., Gibson MSS., Vol. ii, p. 105).

(731) 1831. An affectionate Address to all professing Christians. Thomas Shillitoe.

(732) 1832. An Affectionate Address to the King and his Government. Thomas Shillitoe.

(733) 1832. Sermons preached by members of the Society of Friends. Two sermons by Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 110–120.

(734) 1834–1839. Friends Miscellany. John and Isaac Comly. Refs. to Samuel Spavold, v, 306; ix, 124; xii, 249.

(735) 1835. Testimony concerning Rebecca Byrd.

(736) 1836. Quakerism Examined. John Wilkinson. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 376–380, 411–416.

(737) 1836. Account of the death of Thomas Shillitoe (MS. at L.S.F, Portf. 15, 89).

(738) 1836. Testimony concerning Sarah Lamley (L.S.F., Robson MSS., Testimonies, iii, pp. 244–248).

(739) 1836. Portrait of Thomas Shillitoe, drawn on zinc from a sketch of J. C. Canton (L.S.F., Gibson MSS., vi, 99).

(740) 1836–1850. The Friends' Library. William and Thomas Evans. Vol. iii, Thomas Shillitoe; Vol. xiii, Isaac Sharples.

(741) 1838. Account of the Ministry of Thomas Shillitoe in Norway (MS. at L.S.F., Portf. 14, p. 25).

(742) 1838. Letter by John Barclay of Stoke Newington to Joseph Grubb of Clonmel, Ireland, concerning the preparation of Thomas Shillitoe's Journal for the press and the risk of its being censored by the Morning Meeting (MS. in the possession of the late J. Ernest Grubb of Carrick-on-Suir).

(743) 1839. Journal of the Life, Labours and Travels of Thomas Shillitoe in the service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. N.B.—The copy in the possession of Reginald L. Hine formerly belonged to Joseph Smith, author of A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books, and has some notes by him.

(744) 1840. Memoirs of the Life and Religious Labours of Henry Hull (The Friends' Library, Vol. iv, pp. 233–325).

(745) 1840. Pedigree of the allied Quaker Families of Ransom, Burr, Wheeler, Rudd, Gray, Sharples, Brown, Exton, Tuke, Seebohm, Crafton, Bell, Bland, Lawndy,

Pinney and Marsh (MSS. in the possession of Francis Ransom).

(746) 1840 *circa.* Plan of the graves, plot by plot, with names and ages of those Friends who were buried in the first burial-ground of Hitchin Friends at Ippolyts (MS. in the possession of Francis Ransom of Hitchin).

(747) 1840. Two Addresses to the Prisoners in the House of Correction at Spandau in Prussia, delivered by Thomas Shillitoe.

(748) 1840–1870. An album of silhouettes made by John Thompson of Hitchin and now in the custody of Miss Thompson. Amongst those represented are Benjamin Tatham, Oswald Foster, John and Mary Thompson, William and Ann Lucas, Phoebe Spavold, Lindley Murray, Rachel, Joseph and Charles Lucas, and Joshua Sharples.

(749) 1841–1847. Letters from Samuel Allen of Hitchin to John Candler and Ann Knight (MSS. at L.S.F., Portf. 23, pp. 28, 29).

(750) 1845. Memorials of deceased members of the Society of Friends. Susanna Corder. Account of Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 314–322.

(751) 1844–1845. The Boys' Leisure Hours. A Monthly Miscellany. Benjamin Abbott.

(752) 1847. Prospectus of the School for the Sons of Friends, Hitchin, Herts, conducted by Benjamin Abbott.

(753) 1847. A Visit to Connaught in the Autumn of 1847. A Letter addressed to the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, Dublin, by James Hack Tuke.

(754) 1849. A Short Account of William Moore of Hitchin. Mary Exton.

(755) 1850. Sketches of Friends. Refs. to Ann Ransom, p. 53, and Rudd Wheeler, p. 27 (L.S.F., Robson MSS., N.S. 3).

(756) 1851. A Memorial of Benjamin Collins of Hitchin. Mary Exton (L.S.F., John Thomspon MSS., 90).

(757) 1851. Diary of a Hitchin Elder. MS. in the possession of Francis Ransom.

(758) 1851. An Account of Thomas Shillitoe (Select Miscellanies. Wilson Armistead, Vol. iv, pp. 122–142).

(759) 1853. The Educational Institutions of the United States, their character and organisation: A Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Friends' Educational Society. James Hack Tuke.

(760) 1854. Youthful Pilgrims, or Memorials of Young Persons of the Society of Friends. Esther Seebohm.

(761) 1854. An Account of Thomas Shillitoe (Leisure Hour, p. 200).

(762) 1854. Piety Promoted, by W. and T. Evans. Hitchin refs.: William Turner, i, 281–282; Thomas Thompson, iii, 62–64; Isaac Sharples, iii, 129–135; Samuel Spavold, iii, 194–196; Sarah Crawley, iii, 288–290; Mary Bass, iii, 290–293; Joshua Wheeler, iii, 310–314; Mercy Ransom, iv, 26–29; Joseph Ransom, iv, 149–151; Elizabeth Wheeler, iv, 279–283.

(763) 1855–1856. The Burges Journal. Refs. to William, Jane, Maria, and Alfred Ransom, *passim* (MS. at L.S.F.,Box D).

(764) 1857. Report of the Committee appointed by the Quarterly Meeting of Beds and Herts upon the spiritual welfare of the younger Friends. Signed on behalf of the Committee by Samuel Lucas (L.S.F., Hitchin MSS.).

(765) 1858. Journal and Letters. Hannah Chapman Backhouse. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 193, 217.

(766) 1860–1929. Minute Books of Hitchin Adult School. These are in several hands. The volume for 1860–1867 is missing. The two vols. from 1867–1884 are in Alfred Latchmore's keeping. Those from 1884 to 1906 are missing. The current Minute Book from 1906 onwards is held by the Secretary, Alice Mary Harris.

(767) 1860. Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Stephen Grellet. Edited by Benjamin Seebohm.

(768) 1860. Memoirs of Samuel Tuke. See Index under Hitchin, Lucas, Shillitoe.

(769) 1861. To the Inhabitants of Ashwell: An Address by John Thompson. Printed in William White's pamphlet, The Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers.

(770) 1864. Letter from John Thompson of Hitchin concerning his collection of Quakeriana (MS. at L.S.F., Portf. 27, 1*a*).

(771) 1864. Circular to Friends of the Quarterly Meeting. Samuel Lucas, James Hack Tuke and others.

(772) 1866. An account of Thomas Shillitoe. By ' Colin ' (The British Friend, pp. 251–252).

(773) 1866. The Diary of Mary Sewell (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(774) 1866. On the Sufferings of Christ for our Sake; with a memorial of Esther Seebohm.

(775) 1866–1868. The Diary of Elizabeth Lucas, *née* Manser (MS. in the possession of Miss Matilda Lucas).

(776) 1867. Group photographs of the Hitchin Adult School Classes (Thompson Collection at Hitchin: Vol. i—Class of Joseph Sewell, p. 128; William Ransom, p. 128; Frederic Seebohm, p. 177; Rev. W. Thompson and Miss M. Newton, p. 182; Lucy Sewell, p. 189; and Vol. ii—Catharine Thompson, p. 75; Mary Thompson, p. 107; Ann Lucas, p. 107).

(777) 1867. Thomas Shillitoe, the Quaker Missionary and Temperance Pioneer. William Tallack.

(778) 1867. A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books. Joseph Smith. See Vol. i, p. 326, Isaac Brown; p. 537, Francis Holcroft; Vol. ii, p. 136, Samuel Lucas; p. 470, Jane Ransom; p. 471, Mary Ransom and Mercy Ransom; p. 554, Esther and Frederic Seebohm; p. 571, Thomas Shillitoe; p. 617, Samuel Spavold; p. 736, John Thompson; p. 738, Thomas Thompson; p. 831, James Hack Tuke. In the Supplement to the above, issued in 1893, see p. 2, Benjamin Abbott; p. 141, Bedfordshire Quarterly Meeting; p. 326, John Thompson; p. 343, James Hack Tuke.

(779) 1869. Family Memorials. Isabella Harris. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 84, 85.

(780) 1870. Isaac Brown and his Hitchin Scholars. Account of the Proceedings and Speeches made at Hitchin on the occasion of the Testimonial to Isaac Brown.

(781) 1870. Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Members of the Religious Society of Friends. Ref. to Thomas Shillitoe, p. 237.

(782) 1870. List of Members of the Society of Friends belonging to Bedfordshire Quarterly Meeting, which com-

prises the Monthly Meetings of Hertford and Hitchin, Luton and Leighton Buzzard, and Northampton and Wellingborough.

(783) 1871. A Visit in Paris in the Spring of 1871 on behalf of the War Victims Fund of the Society of Friends. Being a Lecture delivered at the Town Hall, Hitchin, April 4th. James Hack Tuke.

(784) 1877. Account of John Thompson, Hertfordshire Express, August 4th.

(785) 1873. The Report of the Committee of Men and Women Friends appointed by Bedfordshire Quarterly Meeting to visit the Monthly and Particular Meetings within its borders. Dated 'Hitchin, 1st month 15th, 1873.' Alfred and Lucy Ransom served on the Committee.

(786) 1873. Private Memoirs of Benjamin and Esther Seebohm. Edited by their sons.

(787) 1875. Benjamin Seebohm. Frances Anne Budge.

(788) 1875. After Darkness, Light: A Memoir of William Miller Dollin. Jane Ransom.

(789) 1879. Letters and Memoranda of Mary M. Shepherd. Ref. to Thomas Shillitoe, p. 128.

(790) 1880. Irish Distress and its Remedies. James Hack Tuke.

(791) 1883. Letter from Lawson Thompson to Joseph J. Green concerning his father's collections of Quakeriana (MS. at L.S.F., Portf. A, 156).

(792) 1883. A Plea for Total Abstinence. Jane Ransom of Bancroft, Hitchin.

(793) 1885–1900. Dictionary of National Boigraphy. See Notices of Samuel Lucas, 34, 242; Thomas Shillitoe, 52, 108; James Hack Tuke, 57, 297.

(794) 1886. Letters and Correspondence of William Hodgson. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 84 and 177.

(795) 1886. Memoir of Christopher Healy. Ref. to Thomas Shillitoe, p. 119.

(796) 1888. Memoirs of Nicholas Naftel. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 43, 69, 79, 80, 105.

(797) 1888. Biographical Catalogue of the Lives of Friends, etc. See references to Samuel Lucas, pp. 440–443; Isaac Sharples, pp. 610–614; Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 616–629.

(798) 1889. An Account of the Men's and Women's Meetings at Hitchin, Baldock and Royston. Isaac Sharp (MS. at L.S.F., Box D).

(799) 1890. William Dawson: A Memoir. N.B.—The L.S.F. copy has some MS. notes in it from information supplied by Isaac Sharp.

(800) 1890. The Art Training of Birket Foster at Hitchin (Birket Foster, his life and work. Marcus B. Huish. The Art Annual for 1890, p. 3).

(801) 1891. Benjamin Seebohm (Friends of Half a Century, edited by W. Robinson, pp. 277–282).

(802) 1891. Thomas Richardson on Thomas Shillitoe, F.Q.E., p. 524.

(803) 1892. Letter, dated from Highbury House, Hitchin, from Benjamin Seebohm, Junior, to Joseph J. Green, concerning the Editorship of the Annual Monitor by Benjamin Seebohm and Joseph S. Sewell, both of Hitchin (L.S.F., Portf. B, 139).

(803*a*) 1892. *circa*. Recollections of my Childhood. Phœbe Glaisyer (MS. in the possession of Eleanor Glaisyer. Copy of all Hitchin entries taken by Reginald L. Hine).

(804) 1892. Thomas Shillitoe, Shoemaker and Minister. Frances Anne Budge.

(805) 1893. Recollections of Tottenham Friends. Theodore Compton. Refs. to Thomas Shillitoe, pp. 45, 55, 56.

(806) 1894–1896. Quakeriana. See MS. Index at L.S.F. under Ransom, Seebohm, Shillitoe.

(807) 1896. Faithful unto Death. A story of the Missionary life in Madagascar of William and Lucy S. Johnson. See Index under Beck, Dawson, Godlee, Gosmore, Grace, Hitchin, Latchmore, Linney, Seebohm, Sewell, Wilson.

(808) 1896. Benjamin Seebohm as Interpreter and Preacher. J. L. (The Friend, pp. 763–765).

(809) 1897. Family Fragments. William Beck. *Passim*, but see more especially Chapter XIV, pp. 73–77. N.B.—Only one edition is illustrated.

(810) 1899. James Hack Tuke: A Memoir. The Right Hon. Sir Edward Fry. See Index under Hitchin. N.B.– There are several other references not indexed.

(811) 1900. Samuel Tuke: His Life, Work and Thoughts. Charles Tylor. Hitchin refs. 28, 79, 246.

(812) 1900. Poems. Elizabeth S. Lucas. N.B.—A number of these first appeared in F.Q.E.

(813) 1901. Twelve Lessons by Six Members of Adult Schools. Contributions by Esther and Hilda Seebohm.

(814) 1901. Souvenir of Addresses to the Throne. Edited by Joseph J. Green. Ref. to Thomas Shillitoe, p. 85.

(815) 1902. Letter of Stephen R. Smith to Joseph J. Green. Refs. to Benjamin, Esther and Frederic Seebohm (L.S.F., Portf. 37, 79).

(816) 1903–1929. Journal of the Friends' Historical Society. In progress.

(817) 1903. History of the Ancient Family of Marsh, *circa* 1326–1903 (L.S.F., Joseph J. Green MSS. Refs. to Samuel Spavold, pp. 498–499, and Maria Ransom, p. 690).

(818) 1905. Life and Ancestry of Warner Mifflin. Hilda Justice. Ref. to Samuel Spavold, p. 135.

(819) 1905. Howard Letters and Memoirs. William Tallack. Ref. to Thomas Shillitoe, p. 6.

(820) 1905. Thomas Shillitoe. William Robinson.

(821) 1906. The Shoemaker of Tottenham. G. Holden Pike (The British Workman and Home Monthly, January, p. 7).

(822) 1907. A Message from Hitchin Monthly Meeting. Theodore Ransom, Clerk.

(823) 1907. Hitchin: Its Poet and other Friends. William Tallack (F.Q.E., Tenth month, Vol. clxiv, pp. 523–535).

(824) 1907. The Diaries of Edward Pease. Edited by Sir Alfred E. Pease.

(825) 1908. Thomas Shillitoe and the Free City of Hamburg. Maurice Gregory (L.S.F., Typescript attached to Shillitoe's address in German to the Magistrates of Hamburg).

(826) 1908. List of the Documents in the Iron Safe at Hitchin. MS. in L.S.F. N.B.—Most of these documents are now deposited at Friends House. The modern Minute Books only are left at Hitchin.

(827) 1908. Notes of Sunday Talks with Children. These were

prepared by Freda Seebohm and Edith Sheppard for their class of Friends' children at Hitchin.

(828) 1910. The Life and Labours of Elias Hicks. See Index under Thomas Shillitoe.

(829) 1911. The Journal of George Fox. Edited from the MSS. by Dr. Norman Penney, F.S.A. Two vols. Known as the Cambridge Edition.

(830) 1912–1913. Obituary Notices of Frederic Seebohm (By Isaac Sharp, Bootham, Vol. vi, 1–10; Joseph Wicksteed, F.Q.E., 1912, pp. 267–284; Annual Monitor, 1913, pp. 120–131; M.C.A., The Friend, 1912, pp. 117–118; The British Friend, 1912, pp. 54–55).

(831) 1912. The Beginnings of Quakerism. William C. Braithwaite.

(832) 1913. A Book Guide for Teachers. Frederic Taylor.

(833) 1913. A Short Account of Thomas Thompson the Younger of Hitchin (J.F.H.S., x, 124).

(834) 1913. Extracts from State Papers relating to Friends, 1654–1672. Edited by Dr. Norman Penney. See pp. 52, 71, 75, 228.

(835) 1913. Social Service; its place in the Society of Friends. Joshua Rowntree. Ref. to Thomas Shillitoe, p. 62.

(836) 1914. George IV and Thomas Shillitoe. Francis C. Clayton (J.F.H.S., xi, pp. 195–200). And see the supplementary article on Standing before Kings (J.F.H.S., xiii, pp. 145–154).

(836*a*) 1914. In My Youth: From the Posthumous Papers of Robert Dudley. Bobbs Merril. See refs. to Seebohm.

(837) 1914. Benjamin Seebohm. Frances Tatum Rhoads (Quaker Biographies, Vol. v, pp. 77–95).

(838) 1914. The Temperance Testimony of Thomas Shillitoe (Christian Life, February 14th).

(839) 1914. Quaker Biographies. See Index under Benjamin Seebohm and Thomas Shillitoe.

(840) 1914. Obituary Notice of William Ransom (The Friend, pp. 941–942).

(841) 1915. Joseph J. Green: Collection of Family MSS. and Portraits. See Index under Ransom and Shillitoe.

(842) 1915. Mercy Ransom, *née* Bell (1728–1811), of London,

Croydon and Hitchin. Joseph J. Green (J.F.H.S., Vol. xii, No. 1, pp. 9–16).

(843) 1916. John Bright and Benjamin Seebohm (Glowing Facts and Personalities. Edward Smith, p. 19).

(844) 1916. Letter from Edwin Ransom (dated 10th of 1st month) to Joseph J. Green concerning Mercy Ransom (MS. at L.S.F., Portf. B, 55).

(845) 1916. The Hertford Quaker Trials of 1664. Samuel Graveson (F.Q.E., pp. 358–370).

(846) 1916. Friends Beyond Seas. Henry T. Hodgkin. See Index for accounts of Joseph S. Sewell, Lucy and William Johnson, James Hack Tuke, Isaac Brown, Watson Grace, Arthur Latchmore, Charles Linney, Alfred Ransom, William Ransom, Dr. William Wilson, William Beck, Thomas Shillitoe.

(847) 1918. Letter from Mary Thompson to Dr. Norman Penney concerning the painting of the Gracechurch Meeting House (MS. at L.S.F.).

(848) 1919. Notes on the Early History of Ohio Yearly Meeting. Ref. to Thomas Shillitoe, p. 36.

(849) 1919. London Yearly Meeting during 250 years. See Index under Phoebe Allen, Samuel Allen, Ann Lucas, Samuel Lucas, Mercy Ransom, Esther Seebohm, Thomas Shillitoe, Samuel Spavold.

(850) 1919. Account of those Hitchin Friends who served as Clerks to the Women's Yearly Meeting. Joseph J. Green (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(851) 1919. The Second Period of Quakerism. William C. Braithwaite. See Index under Hitchin and Hertford.

(852) 1921. The Seebohm Family of Bradford, York and Hitchin. William Cudworth.

(853) 1921. The Later Periods of Quakerism. Rufus M. Jones. Two vols.

(854) 1922. The Journal and Essays of John Woolman. Amelia Mott Gummere. See Index under Thomas Shillitoe and Samuel Spavold.

(855) 1924. Licence to Reginald L. Hine to examine the documents at Hitchin Friends Meeting House with conditions as to his use of extracts therefrom (Hitchin Preparative Meeting, 31st 7th mo.).

(856) 1924. The Journal of George Fox. A revised text prepared and edited by Dr. Norman Penney, F.S.A.

(857) 1925. Particulars of the Life of Thomas Shillitoe by two of his descendants, Dr. Arthur Shillitoe, of Salcombe, and Mary S. Whiting of Leeds (MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(858) 1925. Christian Practice, being the Second Part of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain.

(859) 1925. Notes on the Families of Sharples, Exton and Ransom, and the Formation of the Hitchin Bank. Edwin Ransom (MS. in the custody of the compiler's family; typed copy in that of Reginald L. Hine).

(860) 1925–1926. The Short Journal and Itinerary Journals of George Fox. Edited by Dr. Norman Penney, F.S.A.

(861) 1926. New Continents. Written for the Friends' Foreign Mission Association by Richenda Payne.

(862) 1926. Pedigree of the Lucas Family of Hitchin as proved at the College of Heralds, with Short Biographical Notes by Archibald William Tindall Lucas (MS. in the Possession of William Tindall Lucas of The Hall, Welwyn).

(863) 1926. The Society of Friends in Bradford. H. R. Hodgson. Refs. to Benjamin and Frederic Seebohm, Esther Wheeler and Stephen Grellet, pp. 41–47.

(864) 1927. The Quakers: Their Story and Message. A. Neave Brayshaw. Second Edition. See Index under Thomas Shillitoe and Joseph S. Sewell.

(865) 1927. Quakers in Ireland. Isabel Grubb. Refs. to Shillitoe, pp. 122, 123, 138.

(866) 1928. Samuel Lucas (1805–1870): His Life and Art-Work. Reginald L. Hine. See particularly the bibliography on pp. 48–50.

N.B.—In the Card Index at L.S.F. there are hundreds of minor entries relating to Hitchin Meeting and its leading Ministers.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

(867) 1531. Grant of a pension to Edmond Moody (Privy Purse Expenses of King Henry VIII, by Sir Nicholas H. Nicholas, p. 164).

(868) 1742–1750. Correspondence between Dr. Evetts and Dr. Ducarel. See Nichols' Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century, Vol. iii, pp. 584–9.

(869) 1795–1800. The Book of the Welwyn Club, meeting at the Swan. About a dozen Hitchin members are named, with accounts of bets, dinners, festivities (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(870) 1809. Particulars of an Excursion made by John Ransom, George Smith and Joshua Ransom principally on foot through Derbyshire and North Wales in the ninth month, 1809 (MS. in the possession of Francis Ransom).

(871) 1810–1815. Accounts of Harvest Home Suppers. The Day Book of John Ransom (MS. in the possession of C. Loftus Barham. Extracts taken by him are in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(872) 1812. An Excursion into Staffordshire performed by Edward Perks, Isaac Newton and William Stevens of Hitchin (MS. in the possession of James Parker).

(873) 1826. May Day at Hitchin in Hertfordshire (William Hone's Everyday Book, Vol. i, pp. 566–7).

(874) 1827. May Day at Hitchin. Herts Mercury, May 5th.

(875) 1832–1839. Hunting Diary of Frederick Peter Delmé-Radcliffe. Illustrated by the Rev. Charles Delmé-Radcliffe (MS. at Hitchin Priory).

(876) 1833. The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England. Joseph Strutt. Ed. by William Hone. Ref. to Henry VIII's accident at Hitchin, p. 32.

(877) 1839. The Noble Science, a few general ideas on Fox Hunting for the Use of the Rising Generation of Sportsmen, and more especially those of the Hertfordshire Hunt Club. F. P. Delmé-Radcliffe.

(878) 1859–1860. Minute Book of the Establishment of the Hitchin Swimming Bath in the possession of F. R. Shillitoe.

(879) 1868. Acrostics by the Hitchin Acrostic Club. The key is separately published.

(880) 1869. From Hitchin to Yarmouth in the *Wanderer* and *Ruby* Canoes. Anon (The authors of this river Odyssey were Messrs. F. Shillitoe and William Hill).

(881) 1870–1898. Two books of paper cuttings collected by W. R. and C. Loftus Barham the Elder, relating to cricket matches in Hitchin between these dates.

(882) 1875–1929. Minute Books and Treasurer's Account Books of the Hitchin Cricket Club in the possession of F. R. Shillitoe.

(883) 1890. The King's Book of Sports. L. A. Govett.

(884) 1894. Hunting in Herts and Beds: Notes from a Diary. William Lucas. Accounts of memorable runs with Baron Rothschild's Staghounds, Lord Dacre's Hounds, Mr. Leigh's Hounds, The Puckeridge and the Hertfordshire Hounds from 1854 to 1880.

(885) 1904. Henry VIII. Edward Hall. Edited by Charles Whibley. See i. 275 and ii. 38.

(886) 1911. Why Not Walk Barefoot? Edwin Ransom (Bedfordshire Standard, August 19, 1911).

(887) 1918. Reminiscences of Hitchin Cricket from 1860–1885. C. Loftus Barham the Elder (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(888) 1922. Bye-laws made by the Urban District Council of Hitchin in pursuance of schemes made by them and approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries under the provisions of the Commons Act 1899 with respect to Butts Close, Oughton Head and Walsworth Common.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

(889) 1265–1477. Extracts relating to Hitchin from the Patent Rolls. Full copies taken by Reginald L. Hine.

(890) 1278–1287. Extracts relating to Hitchin from the Assize Rolls. Copies formerly made for Frederic Seebohm and now in the possession of Reginald L. Hine.

(891) 1324–1428. Extracts relating to Hitchin from the Gaol Delivery Rolls. Copies in the possession of Reginald L. Hine.

(892) 1636–1637. Returns of Hitchin Justices relating to criminal matters in their jurisdiction and as to vagrants, plague, apprentices, etc. (Cal. of State P. Dom. cccxxix, No. 56; cccxlix, No. 70; cccliv, No. 184; cccli, No. 113; ccclxiv, No. 74; ccclxxxv, No. 43; ccccxx, No. 123 and 138; ccccxxvii, p. 274).

(893) 1649. The Divels delusions or a faithfull relation of John Palmer and Elizabeth Knott two notorious witches lately condemned at the Sessions of Oyer and Terminer at St. Albans. Also their accusations of severall Witches in Hitchen, Norton and other places. Ref. No. of copy in the B.M., E. 565 (15).

(894) 1669–1853. References to Hitchin Crime in those parts of the Herts Quarter Session Rolls that do not appear in Hardy's Notes and Extracts (see No. 72). These extracts, taken by Reginald L. Hine, have been numbered and filed for the use of students.

(895) 1680–1741. Constables' Books (St. Mary's Church Records, Vols. xxii, xxiii, xxxv). N.B.—A copy of everything material has been made by Charles Loftus Barham.

(896) 1692–1693. The Life of Captain James Whitney, containing his most Remarkable Robberies, and other Adventures, continued to his Execution near Smithfield the 1st of February, 1692/3. See also Macaulay's account of Whitney in chapter xiv of the History of England.

(897) 1718. A True Discovery of the Conduct of Receivers and Thief Takers, etc. Charles Hitchin. Printed for the author and given away gratis.

(898) 1760–1929. Records of the Petty Sessional Court of Hitchin with informations, evidence, orders, etc. Filed in one room in the cellars and two rooms upstairs in the offices of Messrs. Hawkins & Co., Solicitors, Portmill Lane, Hitchin.

(899) 1776. Account of Hitchin Bridewell. John Howard's State of the Prisons, p. 213.

(900) 1790. Sermons on several occasions by the Rev. Pilkington Morgan. Two vols. N.B.—The B.M. copy has some MS. notes showing when some of the sermons were delivered.

(901) 1808–1825. Minutes of Special Sessions for the Half-Hundred of Hitchin held at the Cock Inn and at the house of William Wilshere (MS. in the possession of Messrs. Hawkins & Co.; extracts taken by C. Loftus Barham).

(902) 1827–1841. A Volume of Assize and Gaol Delivery Calendars, presented by A. Mayes to the Museum at Hertford. See MS. Index under Hitchin.

(903) 1885. Calendar of Letters from the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London, 1350–1370. R. R. Sharpe.

(904) 1901. Punishments for Offences in Hertfordshire in the Olden Times. W. F. Andrews. Herts Mercury, April and following issues.

(905) 1912. Captain James Whitney. W. B. Gerish (East Herts Arch. Soc. Trans., Vol. iv, part iii, pp. 300–305).

(906) 1917. Benefit of Clergy in the Time of Edward IV. C. B. Firth (The Eng. Hist. Rev., Vol. xxxii, p. 177).

(907) 1926. Account of the Life and Execution of John Everett of Hitchin (The Newgate Calendar, edited by G. T. Crook, Vol. iii, pp. 49–52).

(908) 1927. Crime and Escape in Medieval England (Times Literary Supplement, January 13th, p. 17).

WILLS AND TESTAMENTS (i)

(909) 1464–1841. References to all the Wills named in the chapter on Wills and Testaments: Margaret Albury, A.H.S. 25. 24; Margery Astrix, P.C.C. 25 Bodfelde; William Astrix, P.C.C. 14 Blamyr; Agnes Audley, A.H.P. 7. 91; Agnes Audley, A.H.P. 18. 88; Ralph Audley, P.C.C. 32 Hogen; Robert Audley, A.H.P. 9. 58; Lettice Banester, P.C.C. 111 Dorset; Laurence Barn, A.H.P. 4. 129; Francis Berry, A.H.S. 17. 12; Laurence Bertlott, P.C.C. 3 Wattys; Simon Bradyson, A.H.P. 5. 18; William Brockett, P.C.C. 9 Wrastley; Edmund Browne, A.H.P. 1. 11; Thomas Cartwright, P.C.C. 26 Harte; John Casterton, P.C.C. 24 Scott; James Chambers, P.C.C. 43 Daughtry; William Chambers, P.C.C. 20 Ayloffe; Thomas Chapman, P.C.C. 52 Leicester; James Cheetham, A.H.P. 2. 262; Mary Corrie, A.H.S. 20. 337; William Corsore, A.H.P. 7. 137; James Cotton, A.H.P. 13. 20; Elizabeth Dards, A.H.P. 13. 173; Leonard Daye, P.C.C. 50 Mellershe; Elizabeth Docwra, P.C.C. 35 Weldon; Thomas Empson, A.H.S. 14. 188; Edward Feld, A.H.P. 2. 300; John

i. Abbreviations used: P.C.C.—Prerogative Court of Canterbury; A.H.S.—Archdeaconry of Huntingdon Wills at Somerset House; A.H.P.—Archdeaconry of Huntingdon Wills at Peterborough Probate Registry.

Field, A.H.S. 15. 261; George Flinders, A.H.S. 8. 149; Stephen Fox, A.H.S. 3. 42*d*; Elizabeth Fryday, A.H.P. 12. 120; Joan Godfrey, A.H.P. 7. 144; Margaret Grave, A.H.P. 8. 10; Barbara Gregory, A.H.S. 21. 285; Valentine Hawys, A.H.P. 2. 310; Agnes Hemmyng, A.H.P. 4. 128; Edward Howe, A.H.P. 17. 149; William Hubbard, A.H.P. 11. 88; John Huckle, P.C.C. 1 Carew; Thomas Humberston, P.C.C. 57 Drake; Edward Hurst, P.C.C. 33 Windsor; Robert Hurst, P.C.C. 65 Barrington; Robert Hynde, A.H.P. 9. 138; Daniel Joyner, A.H.S. 20. 572; George Kent, P.C.C. 13 Chaynay; Thomas Kent, A.H.S. 21. 352; Alice Lacye, A.H.P. 8. 50; John Lawe, A.H.P. 11. 293; Margaret Lawe, A.H.S. 1. 124; John Lorkyn, A.H.P. 7. 86; John Lovell, A.H.S. 20. 106; Thomas Lowe, A.H.P. 2. 129; Benjamin Lucas, A.H.S. 20. 384; Sir Robert Lytton, Inq. P.M., 6 Edw. VI., C. 142/95/99 (1); Nicholas Mattock, P.C.C. 16 Maynwaryng; John Middleton, P.C.C. 22 Bennett; Thomas Mondys, A.H.P. 9. 118; John Monke, A.H.P. 13. 209; Mary Papworth, A.H.S. 20. 130; William Papworth, A.H.S. 1. 27; Thomas Parrys, P.C.C. 15 Lewyn; John Pawpitt, P.C.C. 52 Aylett; John Pope, P.C.C. 27 Ayloffe; John Pulter, P.C.C. 3 Milles; John Rolfe, A.H.P. 10. 107; Michael Samm, A.H.S. 18. 226; Joane Serle, A.H.P. 11. 199; William Shepherd, P.C.C. 28 Stevenson; Edward Spicer, P.C.C. 14 Ayloffe; Mary Swain, A.H.S. 19. 456; Richard Swansley, A.H.S. 7. 161; Eleanor Tame, A.H.S. 28. 367; Henry Taylor, A.H.S. 18. 29; Francis Thatcher, A.H.S. 14. 207; Ann Trigg, A.H.S. 20. 295; John Trustram, A.H.P. 10. 82; Edward Trycotte, A.H.P. 6. 164; James Tydye, A.H.P. 2. 193; Nicholas Tydye, A.H.P. 4. 98; John Warner, P.C.C. 27 Welles; Edmund White, P.C.C. 258 Alchin; John Wilson, A.H.S. 14. 99; John Wyytt, A.H.P. 3. 43.

(910) 1465–1800. A large collection of copies of Hitchin Wills in the possession of George E. Smyth of Northfield House, Henlow.

(911) 1479–1652. Calendar of Wills in the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon compiled by W. M. Noble (1911). A separate MS. index of the 135 Hitchin Wills has been made by Reginald L. Hine.

(912) 1491–1556. Copies of the following Hitchin Wills in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the Frederic Seebohm Collection: John Scott 1491, John Sturgeon 1492, John Snowe 1500, Agnes Drake 1501, Edward Moody 1504, John Rogers 1506, John Middleton 1509, Edward Spicer 1518, John Pope 1519, William Chambers 1519, John Smyth 1521, Nicholas Mattock 1521, Margaret Astrye 1523, John Emmyng 1524, Ralph Audley 1534, John Fryday 1535, William Audley 1546, William Chambers 1551, William Brockett 1556 (MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(913) 1785–1929. Copies of the Wills proved by Messrs Hawkins & Co., Portmill Lane, Hitchin. Five volumes: the first in octavo, the remaining four in folio. Indexed.

PLACE-NAMES, FIELD-NAMES, AND SURNAMES

(914) 944–1929. Lists of the Place-names, Field-names and Surnames found by Reginald L. Hine in the documents consulted in the preparation of this History, being those cited in the Bibliography with the addition of 950 deeds (MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(915) 1849. An Essay on Family Nomenclature. Mark Anthony Lower. 3rd edition.

(916) 1860. Patronymica Britannica. A Dictionary of the Family Names of the United Kingdom. Mark Anthony Lower.

(917) 1875. English Surnames: Their Sources and Significations. Charles Wareing Bardsley. 2nd edition.

(918) 1877. Hitchin Nomenclature. A poem by George Cowley bringing in the names of most of the leading townsmen of that day.

(918*a*) 1901. A Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames. Charles Wareing Bardsley.

(919) 1903. Hitchin identified with Icini in Iter V of the Antonine Itinerary. Rev. A. C. Yorke (Proc. Cambs Antiq. Soc., No. xlv, New Ser., 5th vol., pp. 2–74). See also letters from A. C. Yorke to Reginald L. Hine, dated 1920, in the possession of the latter.

(920) 1904. The Place-names of Hertfordshire. Professor W. W. Skeat.

(921) 1904. Notes as to old Hitchin names. Alexander Pulling (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(922) 1910–1914. A Hand-list to the Surnames represented by Inscriptions in the County of Hertford compiled by W. B. Gerish. The Hitchin names are denoted by the reference letters C–I (Add. MSS. 39271–39284).

(923) 1914. A Record of the Names appearing in the Church and Graveyard of Hitchin compiled by W. B. Gerish with the assistance of H. F. Hatch (Add. MSS. 39284).

(924) 1914. The Romance of Names. Professor Ernest Weekley.

(925) 1916. Surnames. Professor Ernest Weekley.

(926) 1922. Place-names and History. Allen Mawer.

(927) 1924. Introduction to the Survey of English Place-names. Part I edited by Professors A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton; Part II, The Chief Elements used in English Place-names, edited by Professor Allen Mawer.

(928) 1924–1929. The English Place-name Society. Surveys of Place-names, county by county, in progress.

(929) 1926. Place-names, with Special Reference to their Derivation from Physical Features and in the Vicinity of Hitchin. J. E. Little. A lecture delivered to the Herts Teachers' Association on the 13th November, 1926 (MS. in the possession of the Author).

(930) 1927. Local Place-names. J. E. Little. Articles in the Herts Express for March 12th and 26th, May 21st and June 11th.

(931) 1928. English River-names. Professor Eilert Ekwall.

(932) 1929. Letters from Professor Allen Mawer, Professor Eilert Ekwall and Professor R. E. Zachrisson to Reginald L. Hine relating to Hitchin Place-names; and from Professor Ernest Weekley to the same relating to Hitchin Surnames (MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

THE FIRE BRIGADE

(933) 1663–1730. Register Book of Briefs read in the Church at Hitchin (A MS. which appears to be lost. A summary of its contents is given in St. Mary's Parish Magazine for September 1883).

(934) 1730–1819. References to the Fire Brigade in the volumes of Churchwarden Accounts (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(935) 1767–1806. Short references to about twenty fires at Hitchin and in its immediate neighbourhood recorded in the Diary of an Inhabitant of Hitchin (MS. in the Lewis Evans Collection. Herts County Museum, St. Albans. See also the article entitled A Hitchin Diarist by H. R. Wilton Hall in the Herts Express, March 6, 1909).

(936) 1778. Account of the twenty houses burnt at Hitchin in 1762. The Tablet of Memory, 4th edn., p. 65; and see the London Magazine for 1762.

(937) 1784–1860. References to the Hitchin Fire Establishment and repairs to the Fire-engines in the ledgers of the firm of Isaac and Robert Newton (MS. in the possession of Charles Loftus Barham).

(938) 1817. Regulations painted on a Board in the Engine House by order of the Hitchin Fire Establishment. Copy by Septimus Wright, Treasurer, in the possession of Charles Loftus Barham.

(939) 1828–1834. Hitchin Fire Establishment Accounts. Superintendent Isaac Newton.

(940) 1836. Feb. 29. Minutes of Town's Meeting held after Conder's Fire, with Names of Committee then appointed and Subscribers to Fund.

(941) 1866–1912. The Fire Brigade Diary of Captain Edwin Logsdon (MS. in the possession of Mrs. Logsdon).

(942) 1866–1929. Four illustrated note-books relating to the Fire Brigade compiled by and in the possession of F. Fisher.

(943) 1871–1898. Collection of News-cuttings and Reports of local Fires by Captain C. L. Barham.

(944) 1875–1895. The Diary of Captain Isaac Chalkley (MS. in the possession of John T. Chalkley).

(945) 1895–1929. Materials collected by Charles Loftus Barham for a History of the Hitchin Fire Brigade (MSS. in six large volumes and a number of loose miscellaneous papers in his possession).

(946) 1903. Old memories of November 5th. Charles Loftus Barham (Herts Express, November 14th).

(947) 1904. Account of the opening of the New Fire Brigade Station in Paynes Park. Charles Loftus Barham (Herts Express, August 20th).

(948) 1904. Hitchin Fire Brigade: Some Reminiscences of Bygone Days. Charles Loftus Barham (Herts Express, November 19th and December 24th).

(949) 1918. The Great Ashwell Fire of 1850. H. W. Bowman (MS. in the possession of Charles Loftus Barham).

(950) 1919. An Address on the Early History of the Brigade on the Occasion of their Annual Dinner, November 5th, by Reginald L. Hine (MS. in his possession).

(951) 1920. Historical Notes relating to the Hitchin Fire Brigade. Edgar Newton (MS. in the possession of Charles Loftus Barham).

(952) 1920. Hitchin Fire Brigade—1720 to 1920. An address by Charles Loftus Barham at the annual meeting of the Hitchin Fire Brigade (Herts Express, November 20th).

(953) 1920. Letters from the Sun Insurance Office and the Phoenix Assurance Company to Charles Loftus Barham giving particulars of their financial assistance to the Hitchin Fire Brigade from 1781 onwards.

(954) 1921. A Fireman's Jubilee, giving an account of the fifty years' service of Captain C. L. Barham with the Hitchin Fire Brigade (Herts Express, August 6th).

(955) 1922. Historical notes upon the old Firemen and Engines of North Herts. Charles Loftus Barham (Herts Express, March 25, April 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd).

(956) 1922. The Hitchin Fire Brigade. Charles Loftus Barham. A paper read before the Hitchin Literary and Debating Society, January (MS. in his possession).

(957) 1922–1929. Official Diary of the Hitchin Fire Brigade. In progress (MSS. in the possession of the Hon. Secretary, W. G. Grant).

MISCELLANEOUS

(952) 1475–1860. Miscellaneous collection of deeds and documents relating to the Wilshere family and to the town of Hitchin at The Frythe, Welwyn. By the courtesy of Miss Wilshere these have been examined by the author. Comprising about 12,000 papers, they may be roughly classified as follows: (1) Freehold, copyhold and leasehold deeds of the Wilshere Hitchin estates. (2) Instruction books, conveyancing papers and legal memoranda of the firms of George Draper of Hitchin and of William Wilshere, his successor. (3) Letters, diaries and note-books of William Wilshere, Thomas Wilshere and Charles Willes Wilshere. (4) Drafts of Hitchin wills prepared by William Wilshere. (5) Papers relating to (*a*) Hitchin Petty Sessions, (*b*) Hitchin Bridewell, (*c*) Hitchin Poor Law, (*d*) Petitions against the Slave Trade, (*e*) Petitions in favour of the Reform Bill, (*f*) Hitchin Book Society, (*g*) Hitchin Church, faculties and repairs.

(953) 1697. A letter from Robert Tailor, Apothecary at Hitchin in Hertfordshire, to Hans Sloane describing a great hailstorm there on May 4, 1697. (Philosophical Transactions, giving some account of the present undertakings, studies and labours of the Ingenious in many considerable parts of the world. Vol. xix, pp. 577–8).

(953*a*) 1717–1890. References to Hitchin amongst 15,000 letters and papers of the Thompson family, formerly at Elmside, Hitchin, and now in the possession of Miss Thompson of Bournemouth. Extracts taken by Reginald L. Hine.

(954) 1741. A Survey of the Corn Tythings of Hitchin by John Davis (MS. in the possession of Messrs. Hawkins & Co.).

(955) 1760. An Act for Dividing and Enclosing the Open and Common Fields and Grounds in the Hamlet of Walsworth.

(956) 1767. Diary of Daniel Coulson (MS. in the possession of

George Newton. Extracts in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(957) 1802. The Pocket Book of Dr. Churchill of Hitchin (MS. in the possession of C. Loftus Barham).

(958) 1803–1813. Records of the Hitchin Volunteers, including the Engagement and Articles entered into by them, subscriptions of clothing and equipment, lists of fines for non-attendance and quitting the corps, circular letter as to drill and manœuvres from Lieut.-Col. Wilshere, muster-roll of Captain Crabb's Company and Captain Eade's Company, payments to innkeepers, reports of the guard, list of married men serving and the applications of their wives for relief, medical officers' reports, casualty list of those serving in the Hertfordshire Midland Local, etc. (MSS. in the custody of C. Loftus Barham).

(959) 1811–1929. Minute Books and Reports of the Hitchin and Baldock Auxiliary Bible Society. A complete run of these, and of the reports of the Hitchin Ladies' Bible Association founded in 1819, is in the possession of the executor of Miss Thompson of Elmside.

(960) 1815–1867. Diary of Joseph Sharples (MS. in the possession of Francis Ransom).

(961) 1819. Catalogue of Books in the library of the New Book Society, Hitchin. It was founded in 1813.

(962) 1850–1872. Notes on the Lucas family, 1850 and 1869, and diaries for 1871, 1872. Francis Lucas (MSS. in the possession of Miss Marianna Lucas).

(963) 1853. Hitchin Corn Exchange. Illustrated London News, April 23rd.

(964) 1856. Catalogue of the Exhibition held at the Town Hall to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the Hitchin Mechanics' Institution.

(965) 1869. The Sanitary Conditions of the Town of Hitchin. A paper read at the Town Hall by Bailey Denton. Herts Express, November 20th.

(966) 1870–1885. Biographical notes of Hitchin townsmen compiled by Francis Lucas (MS., 216 pp., in alphabetical order, in the possession of Wm. Tindall Lucas).

(967) 1872. Hitchin Volunteer Corps. List of members (MS. in the possession of F. R. Shillitoe).

(968) 1889. Trade Tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century. William Boyne, revised by George C. Williamson. Hitchin refs., Vol. i, pp. 315–318.

(970) 1889–1910. Architectural notes, drawings, sketches and measurements of the following buildings: The Plough, The Cooper's Arms, The Trooper's Inn, The Priory Park, Bancroft House, old house at Highbury. Walter Millard (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(971) 1892. An Archæological Survey of Hertfordshire. John Evans, D.C.L., P.S.A., etc. No index, but for Hitchin see pp. 1, 2, 6, 7, 13.

(972) 1897. Saxon Coins found near Hitchin. F. Latchmore. Numismatical Chronicle, No. XVII, p. 248. A further note of the same appears in the Proceedings of the Cambs Antiquarian Society, Vol. vii, pp. 152–156.

(973) 1897. The Palæolithic Deposits at Hitchin and their relation to the Glacial Epoch. Clement Reid (Proceedings of Royal Soc., Vol. lxi, p. 40). Reprinted in Herts Nat. Hist. Soc. Trans., Vol. x, Pt. 1, pp. 14–22.

(974) 1898. In Lavender Land, with five illustrations of Hitchin Lavender fields (Cassell's New Penny Magazine, October 12th, pp. 31–34).

(975) 1901. George Chapman of Hitchin, Poet and Dramatist. 1599–1634. A paper read before the Hitchin Society of Arts and Letters by Wentworth Huyshe (MS. in the possession of Wentworth Huyshe).

(976) 1902. The Tylers' Guildhall. Geo. Aylott. East Herts. Arch. Soc. Trans., Vol. ii, Pt. 1, pp. 78–81.

(977) 1902. An Account with Plans of the Earthwork known as Gosmore Mount, Hitchin. Rev. E. A. Downman (Guildhall Library MSS. Downman. No. 324).

(978) 1902. The Brotherhood House, Bancroft, Hitchin. Herts Mercury, November 8th.

(979) 1903. The Old Cattle Market at Hitchin. Herts Express, November 7th.

(980) 1903. A bundle of papers relating to the Brotherhood House and The Croft compiled by Charles Willes Wilshere, Alexander Pulling, Frederic Seebohm and

Wentworth Huyshe (MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(981) 1904–1911. Hertfordshire Archæological Notes and Queries. Contributed to the Herts Mercury. See the MS. index compiled by W. B. Gerish in St. Albans Public Library. Hitchin refs. 14–15, 19–20.

(982) 1910. The Croft, Hitchin. W. F. Andrews and George Aylott.

(983) 1912. An Account of Fifteen Tokens issued by Hitchin Tradesmen in the Seventeenth Century. George Buller (MS. and some of the original tokens in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(984) 1915. Pedigree of the Tristram, alias Trystram and Trustram family of Hitchin, from 1289–1895, by Edward Tristram, F.S.A., and E. J. Trustram.

(985) 1917–1919. The Hytchynne Chronicle by Gildas the Younger. Written anonymously by the Rev. J. G. Williams, M.A., and printed in the Choir Journal of St. Saviour's Church, Hitchin. Gives a quaint, monkishly written and lively account of Hitchin in the last years of the war and the first year of the peace (MS. in the possession of its author).

(986) 1919–1922. Minute Book of the Hitchin War Memorial Committee. Illustrated with paper cuttings, designs and photographs from the Herts Express (MS. in the custody of the Honorary Secretary, W. P. Flint).

(987) 1923. Pedigrees of Newton of Oundle and Hitchin. Communicated by A. R. Martin (Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica. Ed. A. W. Hughes Clarke. Fifth Series, Vol. v, Pt. iv, pp. 106–116, and see previous article in New Series, Vol. i. pp. 169 *et seq.*, and letters from A. R. Martin to Reginald L. Hine in the possession of the latter).

(988) 1924. Some Recollections of Old Hitchin Mills. J. E. Little (Herts Express, December 15th and following issues).

(989) 1925. The English Inn Past and Present. A. E. Richardson and H. D. Eberlein. Refs. to the Sun, the Cooper's Arms and the Three Tuns, Hitchin, pp. 97, 110, 246. N.B.—The Index is defective.

(990) 1925. The Natural History of Hertfordshire. A. Wilmore and others (Hitchin refs. 2, 4, 29, 33, 34, 38, 72).

(991) 1926. History of Barclays Bank, Ltd. P. W. Matthews and Anthony W. Tuke. For the history of the Hitchin Branch see pp. 164–168.

(992) 1927. Notes on the half-timbered houses remaining at Hitchin. Stephen Simmons (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(993) 1927. Emily Davies and Girton College. Barbara Stephen. For the foundation at Hitchin see pp. 219–288.

(994) 1927. Hertfordshire Regional Planning Report. W. R. Davidge. No index; but for Hitchin see pp. 17, 19, 22, 24–27, 31, 38, 40–41, 52, 58, 66, 84, 89.

(995) 1928. Westmill, the story of a Hertfordshire parish. Guy Ewing. Index defective, but for references to Hitchin under Kendale, Turk, Biggin, Sturgeon and Salmon see pp. 24–25, 47–49 and 81.

(996) 1928. List of Hitchin Records in Letchworth Museum, compiled by W. Percival Westell, Curator, and Miss F. K. Jennings, Custodian (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

SCHOOLS AND CHARITIES

(997) 1639. Grant by John Mattock of Conygree, Cow Close and other lands at Hitchin, for the maintenance of a master of the Free School in Tilehouse Street. Additional endowments were made by Joseph Kemp in 1654, by Thomas Honilove in 1688, by Edward Radcliffe in 1660, by John Skynner in 1666, by Thomas Kidner in 1667, by John Davis in 1790, by Joseph Margetts Pierson in 1798, by William Dawes in 1729, and by William Wilshere in 1824 (Deeds in the custody of the Trustees of the Hitchin United Charities).

(998) 1640–1649. Accounts of repair done to the Old Free School (Hale MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(999) 1704. Names of surviving and deceased Trustees of the several Hitchin Charities (St. Mary's Church Records, Packet No. 11).

(1000) 1714. Orders by the Lord Chancellor for the better

regulation of the Free School of Hitchin (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(1001) 1734–1819. Four manuscript volumes entitled Hitchin Charities (St. Mary's Church Records, 24, 25, 25*a* and 26).

(1002) 1750–1817. Miscellaneous Bundle of leases and repairs of Charity Lands, receipts for quit rents, copy wills making charitable bequests (St. Mary's Church Records, Packet No. 5).

(1003) 1750. A list of the persons appointed as additional Trustees of the Charity Free School of Hitchin (MS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(1004) 1750. Surrender by Mark Hildesley of a Copyhold Cottage in Portmill Lane as a School for the instruction of poor girls. Additional endowments were given by Charles Nicholls Field, 1752, John Whitehurst, 1755, William Maurice Bogdani, 1789, Joseph Margetts Pierson, 1795.

(1005) 1750–1762. Accounts of Richard Tristram relating to the Free School at Hitchin (MSS. in the possession of Hawkins & Co.).

(1006) 1777–1819. Three Volumes containing minutes of the meetings of the Trustees of the Free School (MS. in the custody of Hawkins & Co. Copies and extracts have been made by C. L. Barham).

(1007) 1823. Rules for the Government of the Dispensary for the relief of the Sick and Lame poor of Hitchin and the vicinity.

(1008) 1824. Will of William Wilshere endowing the Back Street School which he had founded in 1810.

(1009) 1824–1929. Minute Books and Admission Registers of the British School, later known as the Wilshere-Dacre School.

(1010) 1833. Report of the Commissioners for inquiring concerning Charities. Hitchin, 297–338. This was printed in book form by Charles Paternoster of Hitchin in 1836.

(1011) 1836. An account of the Hitchin Charities extracted from the Further Report of the Commissioners appointed in pursuance of 1 & 2 Will. IV, c. 34.

(1012) 1837–1929. Minute Books of the Trustees of the Hitchin Charities since 1908 known as the Hitchin United

Charities (Four volumes in the custody of J. J. Shilcock, the present Clerk. The earlier volumes are missing).

(1013) 1841. Papers showing cost of building of the Hitchin Dispensary, with balance sheet and first annual report (St. Mary's Church Records, Packet No. 7).

(1014) 1841. Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Hitchin Dispensary.

(1015) 1853–1929. Minute Books and Registers of St. Mary's Church School.

(1016) 1885. Some Hitchin Statistics respecting the Charitable Endowments, Voluntary Institutions, and Places of Worship in the town of Hitchin, with a religious census. W. J. Fitch.

(1017) 1886. Schedule of deeds relating to the Hitchin Charities in the custody of Hawkins & Co. Copy entered in the Minute Book of the Charities under this year.

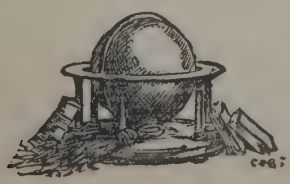
(1018) 1888. Hitchin Grammar School. Scheme for the Administration of the Foundation and Endowments.

(1019) 1906. Scheme for the administration of the United Charities of Hitchin.

(1020) 1917. Letter from Edwin Ransom to Isaac Sharp giving an account of the Friends' Schools at Hitchin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Copy in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

(1021) 1920–1927. Lists of the early Masters, Under-Masters and Pupils of the Free School at Hitchin, and extracts concerning the conduct, repairs and management of the same as found in the records of the town (MSS. in the possession of Reginald L. Hine).

N.B.—All the four county histories (see Bibliography, Vol. I, Nos. 8, 28, 50, 79) give particulars of the Hitchin Charities and Schools.



SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS

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Busby, W. F., Further Bowers, Harpenden.
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Cannon, Edward G. M., Woodview, Walsworth Road, Hitchin.

Cannon, Freda Mary, Woodview, Walsworth Road, Hitchin.
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